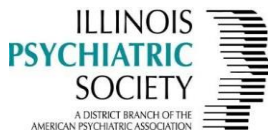




ILLINOIS ACADEMY OF  
FAMILY PHYSICIANS



The Illinois Section  
The American College of  
Obstetricians and Gynecologists  
WOMEN'S HEALTH CARE PHYSICIANS



## Oppose HB 4637 - Efforts by Physician Assistants to Remove Patient Safety Protections

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Physicians throughout Illinois respectfully request your **“NO” vote** on HB 4637, a bill that would negatively impact patient care by removing the collaborative process that patients benefit from currently.

These bills remove the team approach and **grant physician assistants independent practice** after they complete minimal hours of continuing education and clinical training under the guise of optimal practice.

For those physician assistants who do not qualify for optimal practice, the bill significantly weakens the collaborative relationship between physicians and physician assistants. Collaborative requirements are substantially diminished, while scope is enlarged without also requiring increased training and education. For example, **the bill deletes a requirement that prescriptive authority be delegated by the collaborating physician and would allow physician assistants to prescribe and administer all drugs, including Schedule II narcotic drugs by injection in all health care settings.** This is extremely dangerous for patient safety.

**This bill providing for independent practice of physician assistants WILL NOT INCREASE access to care.** While non-physicians often promise that scope expansions will increase access to care, especially in rural areas the evidence shows this is a failed promise. For example, even in states that have allowed independent practice, nurse practitioners have not moved into the rural areas.

**This bill would make Illinois an outlier.** These bills present a considerable change from the current regulation and practice of physician assistants and would make Illinois an outlier compared to other states. The majority of states have requirements that are much stricter than Illinois, such as requiring physician supervision.

**Physician assistants are trained to work as part of a team with physicians.** They are not trained to independently practice as physicians do. **The Physician Assistant Education Association (PAEA) has previously criticized attempts to remove legal supervision and collaboration requirements** fearing this could lead to the negative consequences of compromising physician assistants' success and confidence and posing a potential risk to patient safety.

The Illinois State Medical Society has negotiated in good faith with Illinois Physician Assistant Association for the last decade and has agreed to reasonable changes in their practice act.

Just last year, we made additional changes to how physician assistants are regulated in federally qualified health care centers and provided for a period of transition if a collaborating physician suddenly is not able to practice.

While physician assistants are essential in a patient's care and treatment, there is no substitute for having collaboration with a physician who has a far more training and education. Not only will it be confusing to patients who may not understand the differences, allowing PAs to practice independent of physicians will likely lead to increases in misdiagnoses and over-utilization of services. **For these reasons, we respectfully urge you to vote NO on HB 4637.**