

**PA Academy of Family Physicians
2019-20 State Legislative Agenda
(As of 6/22/2020)**

Prior Authorization Reform

Prior authorizations have become significantly burdensome to family physicians, and more importantly, result in delays and jeopardized quality care to patients. The PAFP supports reforms that would maximize electronic communications for authorizations as well as adverse determinations, and define consistent response times for authorizations, rejections, appeals, and external utilization review. Rep. Steve Mentzer has introduced [House Bill 1194](#), which has strong bipartisan support. The legislation has been referred to the House Insurance Committee. Similar legislation, [Senate Bill 920](#), has been introduced by Sen. Kristin Phillips-Hill and awaits consideration in the Senate Banking and Insurance Committee.

Nurse Practitioner Independence

Nurse practitioners (NPs) are integral, valuable members of the health care team, held in the highest regard by family physicians. However, patients are best served when a physician-led, highly coordinated health care team provides care. The PAFP opposes legislation that would expand their scope of practice and eliminate collaborative agreements. The Senate passed Sen. Camera Bartolotta's [Senate Bill 25](#) on June 12, 2019. Rep. Jesse Topper has introduced [House Bill 100](#). Both bills await consideration in the House Professional Licensure Committee.

Medical Student Choice in Primary Care

Building on the important findings that resulted from a [2015 study on physician shortages](#) in Pennsylvania, the PAFP drafted and Rep. Paul Schemel has introduced [House Resolution 625](#), which would direct the Joint State Government Commission to conduct a study on the efforts of medical schools to promote primary care among their students and include primary care experiences as part of the curriculum in order to expand the primary care workforce and support the family physician pipeline. The resolution awaits consideration in the House Health Committee.

Health in All Policies

Health in All Policies (HiAP) is a collaborative approach that integrates health considerations into policymaking across state government to improve the health of all communities and people. The PAFP sent an [open letter to Gov. Tom Wolf and Lt. Gov. John Fetterman](#) urging the adoption of a HiAP strategy through executive order in order to help address social determinants of health and health disparities, and assist the Commonwealth in developing the most effective and achievable means for improving the health and well-being of all Pennsylvanians.

Health Insurer Credentialing Reform

Delays in credentialing of new physicians or existing physicians changing practices create undo hardships most notably on the communities they serve. The PAFP supports legislation that would standardize the credentialing form and set processing standards. Rep. Clint Owlett has introduced [House Bill 533](#) seeking to codify significant reforms. The bill has passed the House and awaits consideration in the Senate Banking and Insurance Committee.

Buprenorphine Medically Assisted Treatment Act

Access to care for patients suffering from substance abuse disorder is critical, and state regulation could significantly jeopardize access to office based opioid treatment (OBOT). The PAFP opposes legislation that would require prescribers of Buprenorphine to be licensed by the state and pay a state licensing fee. Sen. Michele Brooks introduced [Senate Bill 675](#), which passed the Senate on June 17, 2019. The bill is in the House Human Services Committee and the PAFP is working with the Committee and stakeholders in trying to find a compromise.

Expanding Pharmacy Vaccinations to Minors

The PAFP opposes legislation that would amend the Pharmacy Practice Act and allow pharmacists to administer all CDC recommended vaccinations to patients 9 years of age and older. As part of a compromise several years ago, pharmacist obtained the ability to provide influenza vaccine to those 9 and older. Sen. Judy Ward has introduced [Senate Bill 274](#) that rests in the Senate Consumer Protection and Professional Licensure Committee, while Rep. Seth Grove has introduced [House Bill 91](#) that rests in the House Health Committee.

International Medical Graduate Requirements

International medical graduates play a vital role in our country's health care delivery system and are held to the same educational standards as those who matriculate from medical schools in the United States and Canada. The PAFP supports [House Bill 1947](#), introduced by Rep. Aaron Kaufer, which would bring licensing requirements for international medical graduates in line with those for U.S. and Canadian medical graduates in order to help increase the number of licensed physicians available to treat patients in the Commonwealth. The bill passed the House unanimously on June 9, 2020 and has been referred to the Senate Consumer Protection and Professional Licensure Committee.

Direct Primary Care (DPC) Authorizing Legislation

DPC is a model of care outside the bounds of health insurance and an emerging option for patients and physicians. The PAFP supports legislation that specifies direct primary care agreements are not insurance and therefore not subject to insurance laws or regulations. Sen. Browne is circulating [SCO 877](#) seeking cosponsors for the impending bill.

Restrictive Covenants

In this age of health system consolidations, PAFP supports legislation limiting restrictive covenants in health care practitioner employment agreements. Rep. Tony Deluca has introduced [House Bill 601](#) that rests in the House Health Committee.

POLST Legislation

Working with the Pennsylvania Medical Society, the PAFP supports updating and revising Pennsylvania law to include codification of Pennsylvania Orders for Life Sustaining Treatment (POLST) to be used by medical professionals across all health care settings for patients who voluntarily wish to execute a POLST order. Sen. Gene Yaw has introduced [SB 142](#) that has been referred to the Senate Health and Human Services Committee.

Workplace Accommodations for Nursing Mothers

The PAFP supports legislation that requires employers to provide employees time to express breast milk in a sanitary environment for her nursing child. Rep. Mary Jo Daley has introduced [House Bill 1177](#) that awaits consideration in the House Labor and Industry Committee.

Frivolous complaints to the state Board of Medicine

When complaints against physicians to the Pa. Department of State are found to be frivolous or lack merit by the Bureau of Investigation and Enforcement (BEI), physicians must continue to disclose them when asked if their license has ever been subject to an investigation or complaint. Because the details of BEI investigations are confidential, physicians are unable to explain the nature of the complaint. The PAFP supports legislation that would remove the requirement that physicians acknowledge a complaint if the case was closed without any formal action by BEI or the Board of Medicine. Rep. Curt Sonney has introduced [HB 1743](#), which is awaiting consideration in the House Professional Licensure Committee.

PAFP's State Legislative Agenda is crafted through the Government and Practice Advocacy Committee with position decisions made by the Board of Directors.

Questions/Comments? Please contact Jennifer Reis, Chief Government Affairs Officer at jreis@pafp.com