

POLICY SUBMISSION



October 4, 2023

Dr Heidi Oetter
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College of Physicians and Surgeons of British Columbia
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Director, Regulatory Initiatives
Ministry of Health
Professional Regulation and Oversight Branch
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**Re: Bylaw Amendments to Establish a Licensing and Regulatory Framework for
Physicians Assistants in Emergency Departments**

Dear Dr Oetter,

Thank you for the opportunity to participate in the consultation regarding amendments to the College of Physicians and Surgeons of BC's bylaws to establish a licensing and regulatory framework for physician assistants to work under the delegation and supervision of physicians in emergency department settings in BC.

For more than a decade, Doctors of BC has supported introducing Physician Assistants (PAs) as a way to extend physician services and meet increasing patient needs. We are pleased government is taking this important next step to welcome them into BC's health care system and are supportive of the proposed amendments.

As PAs are brought into emergency departments, we encourage health authorities to engage with physicians to ensure PA roles and responsibilities effectively address some of the current pressures and challenges. Engagement on scope of practice for PAs will ensure that delegated worked optimizes their skills and expertise while ensuring quality of care and patient safety. Early engagement will ensure PAs can move into their roles quickly to provide support where it is most needed.

Doctors of BC would also encourage government to consider expanding the implementation of PAs into other health care settings that require support by amending the *Health Professions &*

Occupations Act to define PAs as a registered profession in BC. PAs could be deployed in other areas of medicine such as anesthesia, surgery/OR assists, and primary care. Further, PAs can assist physicians in seeing patients in communities where access to care is limited or where health human resources are limited. Other provinces such as Alberta, Manitoba, Ontario, and New Brunswick have already implemented PAs in these areas based on evidence that they can reduce wait times, improve patient care, and save health care costs.

Finally, restricting registration to PAs who are employed by health authorities limits the future potential expansion of PAs into other health care settings. We believe that appropriate governance and supervision of PAs can be supported in a range of payment modalities, beyond being employed directly by a health authority. For example, to support the implementation of PAs in community settings, we believe it would be appropriate for a PA to be an employee of a physician who is able to bill through fee-for-service for the services of the PA. We recommend allowing PAs to register and practice under a range of payment modalities.

Again, we applaud government for taking this positive step and look forward to working with you further to implement solutions to ongoing health human resources challenges across the health system. We look forward to working with you, in partnership with the Canadian Association of Physician Assistants (CAPA), as this rolls out.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Joshua Greggain". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a horizontal line underneath the name.

Josh Greggain, MD
President, Doctors of BC