

**Written Testimony of the Connecticut Orthopaedic Society
SB 300 AAC Collaborative Arrangements Between Physician Assistants and Physicians
Public Health Committee – March 16, 2018**

Senator Gerratana, Senator Somers, Representative Steinberg and distinguished Members of the Public Health Committee, on behalf of the more than 220 orthopaedic surgeons of the Connecticut Orthopaedic Society, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in opposition **SB 300 AAC Collaborative Arrangements Between Physician Assistants and Physicians.**

My name is Dr. Mariam Hakim-Zargar and I am a practicing foot and ankle orthopaedic surgeon in Torrington and serve as President of the Connecticut Orthopaedic Society. I also Chair the Credentialing Committee at Charlotte Hungerford Hospital in Torrington.

The scope change proposed in SB 300, was initially reviewed by the Department of Public Health (DPH) under Connecticut's General Statutes 19a-16d-19a-16f and was not selected by DPH for scope revision. This bill would no longer require physician supervision and leaves to the discretion of the individual Physician Assistant as to how, when and if they will "collaborate" with a physician.

This proposed bill significantly broadens the scope of Physician Assistants well beyond their current education, which trains them to practice under physician supervision. Currently, the Physician Assistant's education model of two years post- baccalaureate studies and 2,000 clinical care hours does not provide for advanced training and the education necessary to safely treat patients independently.

The bill's language states that, "collaboration includes coverage by the physician in the absence of a physician assistant". Under the current statute of supervision, the physician takes full responsibility for the care of patients. This bill would place the full responsibility of the patient with the Physician Assistant. Relinquishing this responsibility to a PA could have significant legal consequences for a patient seeking legal recourse as Physician Assistants would be held to a lower standard, due to their education and training, in a court of law, potentially leaving patients with appropriate medical malpractice claims without proper recourse.

As orthopaedic surgeons, we work with and supervise physician assistants in our State. The care they provide, under the direct supervision of a physician, is an important component of the overall care we provide our patients. Some supporters of this bill may contend that the current supervision requirement puts Physician Assistants at a competitive disadvantage however there is a high demand for Physician Assistants in Connecticut.

Without the legislative directive for supervision and lack of specific legislative language for "collaboration", this legislature would create a scope expansion without regard to patient safety and the level of training and education of a Physician Assistant.

On behalf of the Connecticut Orthopaedic Society, we ask you to maintain the safeguard of supervision in the current scope by opposing this bill. Thank you for your time and consideration and I welcome any questions from the Committee.

Respectfully Submitted by:
Mariam Hakim Zargar, MD, MPH
President - Torrington, CT