



Connecticut Academy of Physician Assistants

One Regency Drive • PO Box 30 • Bloomfield, CT 06002
860/243-3977 • Fax: 860/286-0787 • connapa@ssmgt.com • www.connapa.org

February 1, 2021

Esteemed Chairs, Ranking Members, and Members of the General Law Committee,

Please accept this testimony on behalf of the Connecticut Academy of Physician Assistants, pertaining to Raised Bill 5313: *An Act Concerning Revisions to Medical Cannabis Statutes*.

In concept, we appreciate and support the intent of this Raised Bill. However, as it is currently written, we respectfully ask for physician assistants (PAs) to be included in the ability to certify conditions eligible for the medical cannabis program, along with physicians and advanced practice registered nurses (APRNs).

As you are likely aware, PAs work across all specialties and practice settings. PAs evaluate patients, diagnose disease, formulate and implement treatment plans. PAs do so autonomously every day, while working in collaboration with physicians and the rest of the healthcare team. PAs are well educated and trained to perform such functions. PAs routinely diagnose the conditions listed within the medical marijuana program.

The inability for PAs to certify conditions as eligible for the program creates a disparity in the access to healthcare offered to our patients. With PAs unable to certify such conditions, even after having been the provider to diagnose the patient with such conditions, it means that patients are unable to obtain the treatment that they need in a timely fashion. They are forced to make subsequent appointments, with providers that do not know them as intimately as the PA that routinely cares for them. Such appointments delay care and creates additional burden on the healthcare system. This is especially true as this pandemic rages on and access to care is even more difficult than usual for many patients.

PAs in our neighboring states routinely certify conditions as specified within their own regulations without issue. To be more specific, PAs can certify medical marijuana in New York, Rhode Island, Massachusetts, New Hampshire and Vermont, just to consider some of the more local jurisdictions. This matter was brought up before this committee last year with generally a positive response, however the current pandemic prohibited further action upon it.

Please help improve the access to care that our patients deserve by including physician assistants as one of the providers that can certify patients for this program.

We thank you for your time on this matter, and dedication to the patients and citizens of Connecticut.

Very respectfully,

Jason P. Prevelige, MHS, PA-C
Chair, Legislative Affairs Committee
Past President/Director at Large