



December 23, 2016

Donald J. Trump
President-Elect
1717 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20006

Dear President-Elect Trump:

Congratulations on your recent election. On behalf of the more than 108,500 PAs (physician assistants) providing high-quality and comprehensive medical care throughout our nation, the American Academy of PAs (AAPA) looks forward to working closely with your new Administration and the 115th Congress to promote patient-centered healthcare and improve our healthcare system.

As you prepare to take office, we appreciate this opportunity to highlight our shared goals of ensuring that our Nation's healthcare policies will *"broaden healthcare access, make healthcare more affordable and improve the quality of the care available to all Americans."*

As practicing clinicians, PAs play a critical role in the American healthcare system. We would like to highlight several health policy areas raised during your presidential campaign that are also core to AAPA's policy goals:

1. Increase healthcare transparency
2. Expand access to affordable coverage for all Americans
3. Improve our healthcare system

Increase Healthcare Transparency

AAPA agrees that greater transparency in healthcare can provide valuable information for patients and policy makers. Transparency is a critical component to understanding how our healthcare dollars are spent.

For example, AAPA remains concerned that current Medicare reimbursement policies obscure transparent tracking of the volume and quality of medical and surgical services provided by PAs to Medicare beneficiaries. Policies that create hidden providers, with some or all of their services billed to and attributed to another healthcare provider, hide critical data about how and where Medicare dollars are being spent and the true cost and quality of provider services. To improve our healthcare delivery system we must first know how we are spending our healthcare dollars.

The 114th Congress passed bipartisan legislation (Medicare Access and CHIP reauthorization Act (MACRA)), to move our healthcare system towards one that rewards patient-centered value-based care, and which evaluates the care provided by PAs, physicians, and nurse practitioners (NPs) in the same fashion. To realize the potential of

a patient-centered value-driven system, we must work together to improve transparency and remove the federal barriers that limit our ability to achieve progress for our patients and the American people.

Expand Access to Affordable Coverage for All Americans

Our country continues to face a growing provider shortage. Americans deserve access to care irrespective of where they live. This shortage is particularly acute in rural and medically underserved areas. PAs are one of the three primary care providers who manage and provide care across all healthcare specialties. The PA profession is expected to grow 30% between 2014 and 2024 according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics. At the same time, the Association of American Medical Colleges projects significant physician shortages in both primary and specialty care by 2025. We can only meet patient needs if we are fully utilizing our healthcare workforce, including PAs.

To do this, federal policy changes must be made. Nonsensical and antiquated barriers continue to exist in federal laws and regulations that impede access to medical care provided by PAs. This is particularly true within Medicare where some of the most egregious federal barriers prevent PAs from practicing medicine at the level accorded by their education and training and limit the use of advances in technology in telemedicine and other areas. These federal barriers override state laws and impede progress towards the goal of more collaborative patient-centered value-based care.

We are hopeful that we will be able to work with your Administration to continue to break down barriers to care. Recent examples of improved access to care provided by PAs include the following Affordable Care Act provisions:

- Recognition of PAs, along with physicians and NPs, as primary care professionals in the U.S., including full-inclusion of PAs in the new medical home model of care.
- Reduced red-tape and improved access for Medicare beneficiaries by permitting PAs to order skilled nursing facility care and by fully incorporating PAs into the cost-saving Independence at Home demonstration program.
- Reauthorization of the Title VII, Public Health Service Act PA educational Program, creating a 15% set-aside in funding for PA education within the cluster on primary care medicine, as well as faculty loan repayment. As the sole source of federal funding available to PA educational programs, this competitive grants program is critical to the development of a primary care workforce for rural and other medically underserved areas.
- Provider non-discrimination rule that ensures that patients have appropriate access to covered health services by prohibiting health insurers from excluding from coverage an entire class of healthcare providers, such as PAs, who are licensed and ready to provide care.

To increase access to care, remove inefficiencies in the system and assure continuous care to many of our most vulnerable patients, we hope to work with your Administration to retain recent gains and remove additional patient barriers to the care provided by PAs.

Improve our Healthcare System

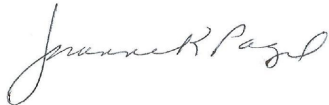
As clinicians, PAs practice team-based, collaborative, patient-centered medicine. Consequently, AAPA looks forward to collaborating with your Administration on policies that focus on caring for the needs of patients and that lead to:

- Affordable access to high-quality and cost efficient healthcare for all patients
- Encourage evidence-based medicine and the utilization of comparative-effectiveness research
- Optimal utilization of primary care
- Provision of basic services to all patients
- Patient choice of qualified providers, including PAs
- Emphasis on health promotion and disease prevention
- Fair and comprehensive reform of the medical liability system
- Focus on enhancing the relationship between the patient and clinician.

Conclusion

AAPA stands ready to assist your Administration in developing policies to improve our healthcare system. We welcome the opportunity to meet with members of your healthcare team to discuss the role of the PA profession, AAPA's healthcare agenda and how we can work together to improve patient-centered care. Please do not hesitate to have a member of your team contact Tillie Fowler, Senior Vice President Advocacy & Government Relations, at 571-319-4551 or tfowler@aapa.org.

Sincerely,



Josanne K. Pagel, MPAS, PA-C, Karuna RMT, DFAAPA
President and Chair of the Board