

# SB810

Measure Title: RELATING TO PHYSICIAN ASSISTANTS.

Report Title: Physician Assistants; Continuing Medical Education; Requirements; Hawaii Medical Board; Random Audits

Description: Establishes biennial requirements of forty credit hours in specified continuing medical education programs for renewal of physician assistant licenses, beginning with the renewal for the licensing biennium on 2/1/2020, and every biennial renewal thereafter. Authorizes the Hawaii Medical Board to conduct random document audits to enforce compliance. Specifies conditions for forfeiture and reinstatement of a license.

Companion:

Package: None

Current Referral: CPH, JDC

Introducer(s): BAKER, S. Chang

## **Testimony of the Hawaii Medical Board**

**Before the  
Senate Committee on Commerce, Consumer Protection and Health  
Thursday, January 31, 2019  
9:30 a.m.  
State Capitol, Conference Room 229**

### **On the following measure: S.B. 810, RELATING TO PHYSICIAN ASSISTANTS**

Chair Baker and Members of the Committee:

My name is Ahlani K. Quiogue, and I am the Executive Officer of the Hawaii Medical Board (Board). The Board supports this bill.

The purpose of this bill is to: (1) establish biennial requirements of 40 credit hours in specified continuing medical education (CME) programs for renewal of physician assistant licenses, beginning with the renewal for the licensing biennium on 2/1/2020, and every biennial renewal thereafter; (2) authorize the Board to conduct random document audits to enforce compliance; and (3) specify conditions for forfeiture and reinstatement of a physician assistant license.

This bill brings the license renewal requirements of physician assistants to parity with those physicians licensed in the State. The Board currently requires that, for a physician assistant to be eligible for renewal, the physician assistant must maintain certification by the National Commission of Certification of Physician Assistants (NCCPA). The Board recognizes that the trend among regulatory boards that certify or license physician assistants are changing and would like to maintain that trend. For the Committee's information:

- 20 states require physician assistants to obtain only continuing education for renewal;
- 15 states require physician assistants to obtain only NCCPA certification for renewal;
- 7 states require physician assistants to obtain either CME or NCCPA certification for renewal; and

- 4 states require physician assistants to obtain both CME and NCCPA certification for renewal if the physician assistant prescribes controlled substances.

Given the above information, the Board recognizes the important role physician assistants have in healthcare and supports bringing their renewal requirements to parity with those of other professions regulated by the Board.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this bill.



## **HAWAII MEDICAL ASSOCIATION**

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To:

SENATE COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, CONSUMER PROTECTION AND  
HEALTH

Sen. Rosalyn Baker, Chair

Sen. Stanley Chang, Vice Chair

Date: January 31, 2019

Time: 9:30 a.m.

Place: Room 229

From: Hawaii Medical Association

Jerry Van Meter, MD, President

Christopher Flanders, DO, Executive Director

**Re: SB 810 – Relating to Physician Assistants**

**Position: SUPPORT**

On behalf of its physician and student members, the Hawaii Medical Association is in support of SB 810 and its goal of parity for Physician Assistants Continuing Medical Education requirements for licensure.

Continuing Medical Education and life-long learning plays a vital role in maintaining a quality health care workforce. Senate Bill 810 will bring CME requirement parity between Physician Assistants and Physicians, as monitored by the Board of Medicine in insuring compliance and quality are maintained.

Thank you for allowing testimony on this issue.

### **HMA OFFICERS**

President – Jerry Van Meter, MD    President-Elect – Michael Champion, MD    Secretary – Thomas Kosasa, MD

Immediate Past President – William Wong, Jr., MD    Treasurer – Elizabeth A. Ignacio, MD

Executive Director – Christopher Flanders, DO

**SB-810**

Submitted on: 1/27/2019 6:25:05 PM

Testimony for CPH on 1/31/2019 9:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Christina Starks	Testifying for Hawaii Academy of PAs	Support	No

Comments:

**SB-810**

Submitted on: 1/25/2019 8:11:02 PM

Testimony for CPH on 1/31/2019 9:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Frank Ancona	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Dear Sirs:

I am in support of this legislation since it will align the testing requirements of Physicians Assistants with other health care professionals testing requirements. The current requirement for PAs is excessive. Thank you.

Frank Ancona

**SB-810**

Submitted on: 1/26/2019 3:08:52 PM

Testimony for CPH on 1/31/2019 9:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
David M Di Martino	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Testimony on Senate Bill 810:

I support this bill because (1) it removes the onerous biennial reaccreditation process for physician assistants that is non-standard practice in the US, (2) it puts Hawaii on an even playing field to compete with other states for quality health professionals who might otherwise choose to work elsewhere, and (3) it stipulates a continuing-education system that ensures that each PA's healthcare professional knowledge is kept up-to-date, bolstering the valuable on-the-job experience that they accumulate. Hawaii needs quality healthcare professionals and this bill helps to remove the barriers that put us at a disadvantage with other states with regard to attracting and maintaining a strong base of physician assistants while ensuring that the quality of professional knowledge does not suffer.



**SB-810**

Submitted on: 1/26/2019 5:34:45 PM

Testimony for CPH on 1/31/2019 9:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Michael Di Martino	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

**SB-810**

Submitted on: 1/28/2019 5:53:43 PM

Testimony for CPH on 1/31/2019 9:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Joy Marshall	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Testimony Re: SB910

I am Kent Reinker, MD, a pediatric orthopedic surgeon licensed to practice in Hawaii since the 1970's. I am familiar with the critical role Physician Assistants (PA's) play in providing high quality care to patients in Hawaii at a reasonable cost. While serving as Chief of Orthopedics at Tripler Army Medical Center, I supervised the training of PA's in orthopedic surgery. I have since worked with them in many settings and have been impressed by the skills they demonstrate, by the empathy they manifest, and by the quality of care they provide.

Most PA's assist physicians in a variety of specialist roles, adapting their skills to the specific specialty of their employer. For example, when I worked at the University of Texas, San Antonio, our orthopedic department was assisted by three PA's, one of which functioned solely within the subspecialty of pediatric orthopedics. They all did a fine job for us.

Although PA's begin with a wide exposure to the whole of medicine, because they tend to subspecialize, they tend to lose skills they do not utilize over the years. This is not unique to PA's. It is true of MD's as well.

It is my understanding that the National Commission on Certification of Physician Assistants (NCCPA) recently began recertification of Physician Assistants. This is done via a written examination regarding all of medicine. Unlike the American Board of Orthopaedic Surgeons, when it began recertification, the NCCPA did not grandfather practitioners who received certification in the past that they assumed would be valid for a lifetime. This decision has now led to a difficult problem as many physician assistants who have been in successful limited practices for decades are not able to pass the examination. These PA's find their livelihood threatened, particularly in states like Hawaii that require that PA's hold current certification.

I feel that the use of a standardized test focused upon the entire breadth of medicine is a completely inappropriate test to determine fitness for practice in a PA setting. Just as I would not like to be tested upon my skills in Ob-Gyn, ophthalmology, cardiology, and psychiatry, I would not want PA's who have worked for orthopaedic surgeons to face the same challenge. Such a test would be irrelevant to the quality of their--or my--practice. Furthermore, to use such a test as an indicator of the competence of the practitioner to practice within the confines of a narrowly-confined practice environment is not just inappropriate, it is unjust.

I do feel that such a test might have some value in guiding PA's to appropriate continuing medical education, so that they can know of holes in their knowledge that could potentially impact upon their specific practices. I would support a requirement that anyone failing such a test be required to demonstrate the accomplishment of, say 20 hours of CME during the next year. But using it to determine whether they can be employed in this state is simply unfair.

PA's play a vital role in keeping Hawaii's medical care affordable. Because their pay is substantially below the pay of MD physicians, they can do vital routine work, allowing the MD's who employ them to concentrate upon the more difficult patients, for which their advanced training is necessary. Forcing PA's to leave Hawaii, where they have worked successfully for decades, is detrimental not only to the PA's but to the population of Hawaii. It is not only unfair to do so on the basis of an irrelevant written test, it is simply stupid.

I support the passage of House Bill 2078, which would eliminate a particularly egregious injustice to these fine practitioners and would help to ensure both high quality and affordability in meeting Hawaii's medical needs.

Kent A. Reinker, MD  
928 Hokulani Street  
Honolulu, HI 96825  
(808) 888-6515

**SB-810**

Submitted on: 1/29/2019 5:06:32 PM

Testimony for CPH on 1/31/2019 9:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
vincent tenorio	Individual	Support	Yes

Comments:

12/29/2019

Honorable CPH committee members,

I am submitting testimony in support of SB 810.

I have been licensed as a physician assistant in Hawaii since 1986. I have maintained board certification with the NCCPA since 1986 and have had to take the recertification exam 5 times and recertify with NCCPA every 2 years. This has cost me in excess of \$4500 since 1986. Additionally, to maintain certification we are required to log CME hours with NCCPA. Their requirement is 50 hours of Category 1 CME and 50 hours of Category 2 CME every 2 years.

There is no area of medicine where maintenance of board certification is required for licensure, other than for PAs. CME is the standard for maintenance of licensure. This bill corrects this problem for PAs in Hawaii and correctly ties maintenance of CME requirements to licensure.

Maintenance of board certification should be optional but should not be required for licensure.

I urge you to pass this important bill.

Fielding Mercer, PA-C

**SB-810**

Submitted on: 1/30/2019 12:24:10 PM

Testimony for CPH on 1/31/2019 9:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Santo Di Martino	Individual	Support	Yes

Comments: