

**MEMORANDUM**

**Pennsylvania Osteopathic Medical Association (POMA)**



**TO:** The Honorable Robert Tomlinson, Chair Senate CP&PL Committee  
The Honorable Lisa Boscola, Chair, Senate CP&PL Committee

**CC:** The Honorable Members of the CP&PL Committee

**FROM:** Joseph Zawisza, DO, President, Pennsylvania Osteopathic Medical Association (POMA)

**DATE:** June 8, 2021

**RE:** Senate Bill 397 – Physician Assistants

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On behalf of the Pennsylvania Osteopathic Medical Association (POMA), I write in opposition to Senate Bill 397 which would amend the Osteopathic Medical Practice Act to provide for changes in oversight for Osteopathic Physicians and the Physician Assistants (PAs) they supervise.

However, I would first like to thank both Chairpersons' staff and the prime sponsor for affording POMA with the opportunity to negotiate on the bill. While we could not reach agreement, Senate staff conducted stakeholder group meetings and provided ample opportunity for everyone's interests to be heard. We appreciate their collective work and inclusion.

POMA still has multiple patient safety concerns with the Senate Bill 397. An Osteopathic physician overseeing the patient care of a physician assistant is an awesome responsibility. POMA is concerned with adding additional PAs an Osteopathic physician can safely oversee in a manner that ensures patient safety. POMA is also supportive of more rigorous physician oversight measures that require the countersignature of patient charts. These standards are again rooted in patient safety.

Finally, POMA is not supportive of filing a written agreement without the State Board of Osteopathic Medicine (Board) having the ability to approve it. There have been instances in the recent past where written agreements should not have been, and were not, approved. These written agreements were outside the scope of a physician assistant's abilities. Thankfully, they were caught by the Board and in absence of the current process, they would have been "deemed approved" and jeopardized patient safety.

Thank you for your time and consideration of POMA's positions on this important legislation.