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August 13, 2008

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The Honorable Michael P. Sturla
333 Main Capitol Building
Harrisburg, PA 17120

Re: Public Hearing on House Bills 2715 and 2716

Dear Representative Sturla:

On behalf of the over 4,700 members of the Pennsylvania Academy of Family Physicians (PAFP), I submit the following for the public record in regards to the House Professional Licensure Committee hearing on House Bills 2715 and 2716, introduced by Representative John Siptroth (D-189).

Currently, under the Practical Nursing Law and the Professional Nursing Law, statutory protection is provided for specific titles and abbreviations that include the following: "registered nurse," "R.N.," "practical nurse," "PN," "Licensed Practical Nurse" and "LPN." House Bills 2715 and 2716 would amend Pennsylvania's Practical Nursing Law and Professional Nursing Law respectively to add statutory protection for general term "nurse."

The reason given for House Bills 2715 and 2716 is that some health care technicians and assistants, either explicitly or implicitly, are representing to patients that they are "nurses." Our members certainly understand that this could easily pose a threat to the public health and safety when a patient may follow the clinical advice of a person that is not educated, trained and licensed to dispense that advice.

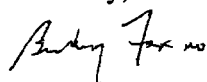
Using the same policy rationale to support of HB 2715 and 2716, the PAFP further requests the House Professional Licensure Committee to consider legislation that will assist patients in knowing what type of clinician is treating them in health care settings across the Commonwealth. Specific to this point, in the Senate of Pennsylvania, Senator Ted Erickson (R-Delaware) has introduced Senate Bill 1435, which would provide for the Health Care Practitioner Identification Badge Act. And, most recently Representative Thomas H. Killion (R-168) introduced an identical version in House Bill 2727. This legislation would require that healthcare practitioners wear name badges which identify and differentiate one another, so that a patient can understand who is treating them, what their level of training and education may be, and directly corresponding to that, what type of advice they are able to dispense to the patient. The PAFP believes the latter legislation would provide additional patient protections using identical policy reasoning.

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Therefore, the PAFP is supportive of the basic premise for both House Bills 2715 and 2716 in that patients need to be informed and protected when individuals working in a health care setting offer clinical advice. We further believe that the House Professional Licensure Committee should consider moving Health Care Practitioner Identification Badge legislation in tandem with HB 2715 and 2716.

On behalf of the PAFP, I thank you for your time and consideration of this letter. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact me at 814-868-9828, or our PAFP Vice President of Government Affairs, Andy Sandusky at 717-571-6647.

Sincerely,



Bradley P. Fox, MD (Erie)
PAFP President

CC: The Honorable John J. Siptroth
The Honorable Thomas H. Killion
House Professional Licensure Committee Members