

Public Testimony on
House Bill 2727
Providing For Identification Badges For Licensed Health Care Professionals

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To
Professional Licensure Committee
House of Representatives
Commonwealth of Pennsylvania

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P E N N S Y L V A N I A
**Academy of Dermatology
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Furthermore, physicians in private outpatient settings are not required to wear any identification at all. This lack of requirement is a throwback to the time when anyone in a white coat was presumed to be a physician.

We patients often have no idea at all what the alphabet soup of credentialing designations on a badge means. What does PA-C, MD, CRNP, DO, RN, LPN, etc. mean? Who is this person in a white coat or scrub suit holding our life in their hands?

There is no consistent design allowing a patient to read or search a badge for credentials without physically holding the badge. The credential and most other information on the badge are often too small to read at a conversational distance.

If there is a badge, where on the badge should we look for a credential that has meaning which we can immediately understand?

More often than not, one cannot know the licensure credentials and thereby the level of expertise of the health care professional right in front of us.

WHY DON'T PATIENTS ASK FOR THE LICENSURE CREDENTIAL?

Because by doing so we are afraid of insulting the caregiver in front of us by questioning their expertise. We are afraid of this because this person often literally holds in their hands our lives or that of our loved ones. We're afraid to incite anger or resentment in our caregiver.

THE SOLUTION

HB 2727 requires that all caregivers in Pennsylvania wear an identification badge with some standardized features in each and every face-to-face encounter with every patient in Pennsylvania.

The most important information for patients to know is shown as the most prominent feature in the badge:

DESIGNATION OF THE PROFESSIONAL LICENSURE CREDENTIAL IN A STANDARD LOCATION AT THE BOTTOM OF THE BADGE AND EASILY LEGIBLE AT A CONVERSATIONAL DISTANCE.

All of us patients in Pennsylvania will become accustomed to looking for this most critical information in each and every health care encounter in an office, hospital, clinic, etc.

Our friends in the Hospital Association have led the way in trying to make these identifications clear. Proud of their efforts, they may object to more specific regulations.

Because of the current varying designs from institution to institution, we patients don't know where to look on the badge for the licensure credential. Some hospital identification badges have an institutional logo and photograph taking up most of the badge with the name of the caregiver and their license credential too small to read.

Under this bill, that credential will be prominently displayed on the bottom of the identification badge in every hospital, nursing home, physician office, pharmacy, or other health care facility in the state.

Thus we patients will be completely informed every time.

This bill and its badge design provide plenty of space for hospitals to provide any institutional information they require. We recommend grandfathering in their existing badges and giving, say, a year to retire the old designs.

CLOSING


We patients make complicated decisions regarding our own health care and that of our loved ones each and every day. We need every piece of information we can get, starting with the nature of the education and training of the persons to whom we entrust our lives.

Thank you for your attention and thoughtful consideration.

Health Care Practitioner Identification Badge Act

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 Hypothetical Hospital

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