

Pennsylvania Academy of Family Physicians (PAFP)

Testimony

**Pennsylvania House of Representatives
Professional Licensure Committee**

House Bill 2727
Health Care Practitioner Identification Badge Act

October 23, 2008

**Paul Peck Alumni Center
Drexel University
Philadelphia, PA**

Testimony Presented by:

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Good afternoon Chairman Sturla and members of the House Professional Licensure Committee. My name is Dr. Brad Fox. I am a practicing family physician in Erie, Pennsylvania and also President of the Pennsylvania Academy of Family Physicians. It is on behalf of the 4,700 members of the PAFP that I speak with you here today in support of House Bill 2727 Health Care Practitioner Identification Badge Act, introduced by Representative Thomas Killion.

As a way of background, in August of this year, the PAFP submitted written testimony to this Committee in support of House Bills 2715 and 2716, introduced by Representative John Siptroth. That package of legislation would amend Pennsylvania's Practical Nursing Law and Professional Nursing Law respectively to add statutory protection for the general term "nurse." And to reiterate, the PAFP does support those bills. The policy reasoning used to support House Bills 2715 and 2716 was that some health care technicians and assistants, either explicitly or implicitly, were representing to patients that they were "nurses." Our family physician 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.

Fast forward to our hearing today, and our family physician members use identical policy reasoning to assert their support for House Bill 2727, the Health Care Practitioner Identification Badge Act. House Bill 2727 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 that House Bill 2727, the Health Care Practitioner Identification Badge Act would provide additional and needed patient protections using identical policy reasoning.

Throughout the Commonwealth, in hospitals and in family medicine offices, family physicians work collaboratively with all types of very skilled allied health care providers and attest to their skills in helping to provide quality care to their collective patient base. In fact, many of these practitioners have obtained advanced degrees, and some have even completed doctoral programs, to hopefully increase their positive impact on patient care.

However, the PAFP believes that a patient can be misled when either explicitly or implicitly the patient is led to believe that the person treating them is a medical doctor. HB 2727 would be one attempt to provide patient disclosure as to who is

treating them and again what qualifications they may have when dispensing medical advice.

Each legislative session, the House Professional Licensure Committee and the General Assembly see many bills introduced and some that are enacted that seek to amend the laws and regulations of the Commonwealth to establish or increase the various scopes of practice that professional advocacy groups argue are warranted. While the merits of the proposals from the patient and policy perspectives are debatable, the fact that they are perpetually present is not. And, as we work to keep our laws and regulations on par with the practices that match the education and training levels of the person, we should also work to simultaneously keep the patient informed and safe. The Health Care Practitioner Identification Badge Act would work toward both those outcomes.

In closing, the PAFP pledges to work with this Committee, the Pennsylvania Medical Society and others in administering this legislation should it be enacted. Thank you for the opportunity to provide this testimony for you this afternoon and I will do my best to answer your questions at this time.