



COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA  
DEPARTMENT OF STATE  
BUREAU OF PROFESSIONAL AND OCCUPATIONAL AFFAIRS  
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October 17, 2008

The Honorable P. Michael Sturla  
Majority Chairman  
House Professional Licensure Committee  
PA House of Representatives  
333 Main Capitol Building  
Harrisburg, PA 17120-2096

Dear Chairman Sturla:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on House Bill 2727, which is the subject of a public hearing by the House Professional Licensure Committee on Thursday, October 23, 2008. As you know, House Bill 2727 would require health care practitioners to wear identification badges when treating patients, working in health care facilities or when engaged in face-to-face contact with the public in a professional capacity.

The Department of State (Department) supports the proposition that health care practitioners be required to wear identification badges, which is generally the standard in health care currently. For example, existing regulations of the Department of Health require health care practitioners to wear identification tags which display the person's name and professional designation when working in a health care facility including ambulatory surgical facilities, general hospitals, special hospitals, long-term care nursing facilities, birth centers, home health agencies and cancer treatment centers. The State Board of Medicine and State Board of Osteopathic Medicine also have regulations in place, which require practitioners who are not physicians, such as physician assistants, acupuncturists, and practitioners of oriental medicine, to wear identification badges.

However, the Department does not believe that the individual licensing boards under the Bureau of Professional and Occupational Affairs (BPOA) should be obligated to issue and approve the badges required under HB 2727. The issuance of the badges would be costly and

- OVER -

October 17, 2008

Page 2

administratively difficult. There are currently over 450,000 licensees for which the boards would need to issue badges. The Department estimates the cost to be in excess of \$710,000 annually. Also, BPOA does not have the capability to produce the badges in-house and would need to contract with another entity to comply with the requirements of the bill, which will increase the processing time of initial and renewal applications. For this reason, the Department requests that Section 6 of the bill be amended to eliminate the requirement that the Department issue the identification badges.

Again, thank you for allowing the Department of State to comment on this legislation. Please contact me with any questions or concerns at 717-783-7192.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Basil L. Merenda". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "B".

Basil L. Merenda  
Commissioner

C: Honorable William F. Adolph Jr., Republican Chairman, House Professional Licensure Committee