



Action Alert

Now is the time for you to act!

LD 830 “An Act to Eliminate the Dual Licensing of Physician Assistants”

This bill is a concept draft pursuant to Joint Rule 208.

This bill proposes to reduce the regulatory burden on a physician assistant who is currently required to be licensed by both the Board of Licensure in Medicine and the Board of Osteopathic Licensure if that physician assistant is supervised by both allopathic and osteopathic physicians. The bill proposes to require one of the physician licensing boards to issue all the licenses needed by a physician assistant, regardless of which board licenses the supervising physician.

There are 2 ways to express your support for the bill to the LCRED Committee:

- #1 Testify in person to the Committee Members on:
Tuesday April 7th at 1pm Cross State Office Building Room 208
This option STRONGLY suggested!
How to prepare:
Read LD 830
Decide how dual licensing impacts our profession and patients
Prepare to speak for 3 minutes or less
Personal/Patient Stories are a powerful part of testimony
Type a summary of your verbal testimony and bring 25 copies to give to the committee members

- #2 Submit Written Testimony:
Written Testimony must be submitted to: LCRED Committee Clerk, Diane Steward
diane.steward@maine.gov
Written Testimony should include:
Your name, title, and the town where you live
Address the LCRED Committee
State you are writing in Support of LD 830
Start your written testimony with:
Senator Volk, Representative Herbig, and Members of the LCRED Committee

Please also send a copy of your written testimony to info@mainepa.com

What is MEAPA Leadership going to say in the committee hearing?

We are disappointed in the inaction of the licensing boards
We plan to ask specifically for the following 3 items to assist with moving forward

Create a task force with representatives from UNE PA Program, MEAPA, and both licensing boards to expedite writing of the joint rules

Set a deadline when the joint rules must be done

Leave the opportunity to revisit the issue in the 2016 legislative session if the work is not completed by the deadline or the outcome is does not satisfy the initial intent

Please notify MEAPA if you plan to testify in person or in writing.

Questions? Contact Erika Pierce, PA-C erikasnowman@hotmail.com or info@mainepa.com

2014-15

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"The Brief History Behind LD 830"

In the fall of 2010 the MEAPA Advocacy Team made a request to the Osteopathic Board of Licensure. The request was to allow PAs who license under their board to prescribe schedule II medications. At the time this request was supported by both the Maine Osteopathic Association and the Maine Medical Association. Schedule II prescribing authority was just one of several areas where the rules for PAs differed between the two medical licensing boards here in Maine. In response to the request a small work group of the Osteopathic Licensing Board formed and early stages of developing language to change the rules began. Over a period of time the work fell idle and despite ongoing advocacy efforts, the rule changes simply never happened.

The ability to prescribe schedule II medications was not the only area where Maine PAs had differing rules to practice by. In the State of Maine, PAs are licensed based on the educational choice of their supervising physician. For years Maine PAs have licensed to two boards; The Board of Licensure in Medicine if you are teamed with an allopathic physician or the Osteopathic Board of Licensure if with an osteopathic physician. These 2 boards have different rules for PAs. In practice PAs work with both MDs and DOs throughout their career and often with both in the course of a single shift. The two boards having separate and different rules for PAs poses concern both for PAs and most importantly, the patients we care for.

At the same time the MEAPA Advocacy Team was making their request for schedule II prescribing authority to the Osteopathic Licensing Board, they were also reviewing the latest Chapter 2 rules coming out of the Board of Licensure in Medicine. The advocacy team was effective in stopping an abolition of the PAs ability to own a practice and several other key practice barriers. This was done by being present at the meetings and educating about the profession as well as giving data about how other state licensing boards handle similar concerns.

After several years of working with the boards, the MEAPA Board of Directors along with the MEAPA Advocacy Team made the decision to move forward with introducing legislation. The lack of progress with our requests to the boards along with the understanding that PAs licensing under two boards with different rules was not working anymore became the driving force behind the decision to move forward with legislation. Representative Mastracchio of Sanford sponsored a bill in 2013. The bill moved through committee and was unanimously passed in the house and senate. The key points in the bill were:

- PAs may delegate “medical acts” to medical assistants

- PAs can own a medical practice in Maine

- The licensing boards are to issue a single license

- The licensing boards are to collaborate and agree on a single set of rules for all Maine PAs

- Create a Physician Assistant position on both licensing boards

Initially collaboration between the two licensing boards created a new draft of joint rules. However, upon review of the draft rules it was clear to the MEAPA Advocacy team that the rules were still not uniform as there were multiple exceptions for PAs who work with an Osteopathic physician. The advocacy team raised these concerns at a Physician Assistant Advisory Committee meeting. The boards were encouraged to revisit the rules to move closer to a uniform rule so the formal rule making process could begin.

One year after the boards were mandated by law to create a uniform rule for PAs the work simply was not done. There was not yet a uniform draft and it seemed the work had simply stopped. There were also concerns with both boards issuing one license with one license number. Apparently issuing one license was simply not legally possible with the way current laws are interpreted.

In the fall of 2014, the MEAPA Board of Directors and Advocacy Team agreed that it was time to return to the legislature. The purpose this time will be two-fold:

1. For MEAPA Leadership to express to the Legislators our disappointment in the lack of progress
2. Open another conversation about the best way for PAs to license in Maine.

We plan to ask specifically for the following 3 items to assist with the process

- A. Create a task force with representatives from UNE PA Program, MEAPA, and both licensing boards to write the joint rules
- B. Set a deadline whereby the joint rules must be done
- C. Leave the opportunity to revisit the issue in the 2016 legislative session if the work is not completed by the deadline

For now, MEAPA is asking for forward progress on what was already required by law in 2013. If consensus cannot be reached on a joint rule and how to streamline PA licensing under current laws, then in 2016 the issue will again be taken up in the legislature.

In closing, advocacy is ongoing. MEAPA advocacy volunteers are working on your behalf in Augusta. MEAPA would like to also thank Gordon H. Smith, Esq. , Representative Anne-Marie Mastraccio and all other legislators who have worked on this legislation.

Your input on these or other issues are welcome. Countless volunteer hours have gone into the advocacy that has moved these issues this far. Please take a few minutes to submit written testimony in support of simplifying PA licensing.

Written by: Erika Pierce PA-C



PA Bill LD 830 sponsor Rep. Mastraccio at recent Physician's Day at the legislature with MEAPA President Kirsten Thomsen, PA

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