

Physician Assistants Act 46

HB 1251, PN 2287

Sponsor: Rep. Readshaw

Date Enacted: July 20, 2007

Summary:

Act 46 expands access to primary care for individuals by increasing the number of physician assistants that can be supervised by a physician under a collaborative agreement.

Prior Law:

Under section 13(e)(5) of the Medical Practice Act of December 20, 1985 (P.L. 457, No. 112), a physician could not have primary responsibility for more than two physician assistants under a collaborative or written agreement. Also, a physician assistant could not be responsible to more than three physicians.

Analysis:

Act 46 amends the Medical Practice Act to allow a physician (MD) to increase the number of physician assistants that the MD can supervise under a collaborative or written agreement from two to four. The act also permits physicians to apply to the State Board of Medicine for a waiver of this number. Additionally, the bill repeals a provision that a physician assistant may not be responsible to more than three physicians, instead providing that physician assistants should be responsible to the attending physician for a particular patient.

Impact:

By increasing the number of physician assistants that can be supervised by a physician, more patients can be treated in a shorter amount of time. This takes pressure off the physicians, while allowing physician assistants to practice to the full extent of their training. As part of the package of scope of practice bills under Governor Rendell's Prescription for Pennsylvania, this will increase the overall efficiency of the healthcare system. Studies show that adding a physician assistant to a medical practice can double the number of patients seen, while maintaining the same level of quality of care.

Effective Date: 60 days from enactment