



March 22, 2017

The Honorable Aaron Ling Johanson
Chairman
Hawaii State House Committee on Labor & Public Employment
Hawaii State Capitol
Room 426
415 South Beretania Street
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Dear Chairman Johanson:

The American Osteopathic Association (AOA) and the Hawaii Association of Osteopathic Physicians and Surgeons (HAOPS) are writing to encourage you to oppose SB 984. This bill amends the definition of “physician” in the state’s workers’ compensation laws to include Advanced Practice Registered Nurses (APRNs). This bill also expands the scope of practice for APRNs to allow them to be responsible for treatment of injured workers in workers’ compensation cases. The AOA and HAOPS oppose the use of the title “physician” by non-physician clinicians as it is likely to deceive the public by implying that the clinician is engaged in the unlimited practice of medicine. We also believe that this APRN scope of practice expansion is improper, and that health professionals’ scope of practice must be based on their level of training, education, experience and examination.

The AOA represents nearly 130,000 osteopathic physicians (DOs) and osteopathic medical students, promotes public health, encourages scientific research, serves as the primary certifying body for DOs and is the accrediting agency for osteopathic medical schools. More information on DOs/osteopathic medicine can be found at www.osteopathic.org. HAOPS is a professional medical organization that represents over 300 DOs providing patient care in Hawaii.

The AOA and HAOPS support the “team” approach to medical care because the physician-led medical model ensures that professionals with complete medical education and training are adequately involved in patient care. While we value the contributions of APRNs to the health care delivery system, the AOA and HAOPS believe any expansion of their authority to provide direct patient care without physician involvement should be directly related to additional education, training and competency demonstration requirements. Additionally, we believe that physician involvement is a key component to the delivery of high-quality, patient-centered health care.

Osteopathic medical education includes:

- **Four years of medical school**, which includes two years of didactic study totaling upwards of **750 lecture/practice learning hours** just within the first two years, plus two more years of clinical rotations done in community hospitals, major medical centers and doctors’ offices.

- **12,000 to 16,000 hours of supervised postgraduate medical education**, i.e., residencies, where DOs develop advanced knowledge and clinical skills relating to a wide variety of patient conditions.
- Hawaii-licensed DOs must complete **40 continuing medical education hours per two-year renewal period**.
- Board certified DOs also participate in **Osteopathic Continuous Certification**, a process that compares their current practice performance against established benchmarks.

APRN education includes:

- **A two-year master's degree program**, which may be done online, and is approved by the State Board of Nursing.
- **Approved master's programs include some clinical training**, but no postgraduate medical education is required.
- Hawaii-licensed APRNs must complete **30 hours** of continuing education **every two years**.

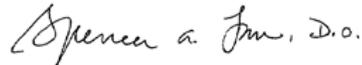
Allowing APRNs to use the title of physician is likely to deceive the public by implying that the APRN has received complete medical training and is able to provide the full scope of medical services, including the performance of surgery.

To protect the public's health and safety, health professionals' scope of practice and titles must be based on their level of training, education, experience and examination. **We urge you to protect the safety of Hawaii's patients by opposing SB 984.** Should you need any additional information, please feel free to contact Nick Schilligo, MS, Associate Vice President, State Government Affairs at nshelligo@osteopathic.org or (800) 621-1773, ext. 8185.

Sincerely,



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President, AOA



Spencer Lau, DO
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