

March 15 2017

The Honorable Gary Herbert
Governor of Utah
350 North State Street
Suite 200
PO Box 142220
Salt Lake City, Utah 84114-2220

Dear Governor Herbert:

The undersigned organizations are writing to urge you to veto HB 396. This bill would create a new class of licensure in the State of Utah, Associate Physician (AP), allowing medical school graduates who have not completed postgraduate residency training to provide primary care services to patients under limited physician supervision. This includes prescribing potentially fatal controlled substances. The medical school curriculum is not developed to test an individual's ability to provide independent patient care; rather, graduates have demonstrated the competency needed to continue their training under the rigorous and defined supervision requirements of accredited residency programs. Additionally, these individuals have not yet passed a complete examination series testing their medical knowledge, which is currently required by the state to demonstrate the ability to provide unsupervised care to patients.

We are committed to working with the State of Utah to help address primary care workforce shortages, in an attempt to provide adequate access to high quality health care for patients. However, we have strong concerns with an AP license as we believe that only fully trained physicians are equipped to provide comprehensive primary care services to patients.

The potential harm that can result from having providers that are not fully qualified to provide patient care is great, and therefore, we believe this is a risky approach to increasing access to primary care in rural and underserved areas.

Currently, there is no federal recognition for APs and no state has licensed an AP. We question if this experiment is one that is safe for Utahns, whom the state has an obligation and responsibility to protect from harm. If medical school graduates are interested in providing primary care to patients in underserved and rural areas, opportunities exist for qualified individuals. More than 2,700 American accredited primary care residency slots have gone unfilled over the last five years.^{1,2}

We strongly oppose this bill and encourage the State of Utah to continue to look at alternative approaches to address the primary care workforce needs of the State. This bill will not solve the problem it attempts to address. The current surplus of primary care residency slots, the minimal amount of potential licensees and lack of payment for services provided by APs all highlight the need to examine alternative approaches. We believe Utahns would be best served by looking at efforts to address overall physician workforce needs that facilitate opportunities for completion of formal postgraduate medical training. **We urge you to protect Utah's patients by vetoing HB 396.**

We appreciate your consideration of our concerns. Should you or your staff have any questions, please contact Nick Schilligo, MS, Associate Vice President, AOA State Government Affairs at nschilligo@osteopathic.org or (800) 621-1773, ext. 8185.

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Sincerely,

American Osteopathic Association

American College of Osteopathic Family Physicians

American College of Osteopathic Internists

American College of Osteopathic Obstetricians and Gynecologists

Utah Chapter - American Academy of Pediatrics

Utah Osteopathic Medical Association