

February 24th, 2021

Dear Members of the House Health and Insurance Committee,

I would like to thank the committee for the opportunity to submit written testimony in support of HB21-1005. My name is Alyn Whelchel and I am the President of the Colorado Academy of Physician Assistants (CAPA). I have practiced Family Medicine in Colorado for 18 years, and currently serve on the faculty at Red Rocks Community College Physician Assistant Program. I have been a PA for over 20 years.

CAPA strongly supports the development of the health care services reserve corps task force. CAPA represents approximately 3,550 PAs in the state of Colorado. We function as touch points for PAs and PA students in our state. Many PAs contacted CAPA during the COVID-19 pandemic with concerns and questions surrounding care issues, workplace concerns, and inability to maintain adequate employment.

Many of these individuals were still willing to serve patients in roles other than their current employment, and I truly believe cross training of providers would alleviate some of these concerns. PAs need the training to step into other roles when needed in order to maintain access to care for patients. This task force provides important infrastructure to properly and effectively care for Colorado citizens in times of crisis. The current pandemic highlights these needs in dramatic fashion.

We are grateful for the time and energy proposed to develop a thoughtful, careful process to develop and eventually implement this type of program. Healthcare is complex and deserves the expertise of multiple professions to ensure an effective response to emergencies in the future.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this very important legislation, and I urge your support for HB21-1005.

Alyn Whelchel, MSPA, PA-C

President, Colorado Academy of Physician Assistants.