

Dear Committee Chair,

I would like to thank the committee for the opportunity to submit written testimony in support of HB-1005. My name is Alyn Whelchel and I am the President of the Colorado Academy of Physician Assistants (CAPA). I 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 and functions as a touch point for PAs and PA students in our state. Many PAs contacted CAPA during the COVID pandemic with concerns and questions surrounding care issues, workplace questions and inability to maintain adequate employment. The pandemic shifted patient care needs in dramatic ways and many PAs who were willing to serve patients in roles other than their current employment struggled to find meaningful ways to contribute. I truly believe cross training of providers would alleviate some of these concerns. PAs need the training to step into providers roles when needed 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 implement this type of program. Healthcare is complex and deserves the expertise of multiple professions to insure an effective response to emergencies in the future. PAs believe in team-based collaborative care and this task force ensures each unique medical profession will be represented and included to provide the best possible patient care in our state.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this very important legislation.

Alyn Whelchel, MSPA, PA-C

President, CAPA