



Chair of the Board/
Immediate Past President
Mary P. Ettari, M.P.H., PA-C

President
Gregor F. Bennett, M.A., PA-C

President Elect
Cynthia B. Lord, M.H.S., PA-C

Vice President/Speaker
House of Delegates
Paul S. Robinson, PA-C

Secretary
John D. Trimbath, M.P.A.S., PA-C

Treasurer
Bruce C. Fichandler, PA

First Vice Speaker
House of Delegates
William H. Fenn, Ph.D., PA

Second Vice Speaker
House of Delegates
Alan Hull, PA-C

Director at Large
James E. Delaney, PA-C

Director at Large
Patrick E. Killeen, M.S., PA-C

Director at Large
Patti Pagels, M.P.A.S., PA-C

Director at Large
Daniel T. Thibodeau, M.H.P., PA-C

Student Representative
Gary A. Jordan, PA-C

Executive Vice President/
Chief Executive Officer
Bill Leinweber

May 12, 2008
The Washington Post
1150 15th St. NW
Washington, DC 20071

Dear Editor:

We at the American Academy of Physician Assistants (AAPA) wish to thank you for your recent series highlighting the problems foreign detainees face in obtaining quality health care.

Our country is facing a shortage of quality health care providers in many areas, including prisons and jails. The problem is not limited to immigrant detainees. Physician assistants (PAs) have for many years been part of the solution to the health care shortage in prisons, jails, and elsewhere. Your article points to a few instances in which poor decisions, attributed to physician assistants, are alleged to have caused complications in or worsening of detainees' medical conditions.

Such incidents are both unfortunate and tragic. The vast majority of the nearly 70,000 PAs in clinical practice in the United States are committed, caring health professionals who work with physicians to deliver accessible, cost effective, quality health care to everyone who needs care. AAPA policy encourages PAs and other health care professionals who provide care in the nation's prisons and jails to maintain their professional credentials and seek recognition through the National Commission on Correctional Health Care's Certified Health Professional Program.

The battle to end disparities in health care and the shortage of health care professionals in prisons, jails, and elsewhere, will require the cooperation of health care professionals from all disciplines and on all levels. Physician assistants are and will continue to be an integral element in the quest to ensure that all patients, regardless of race, gender, nationality, or nation of citizenship, have equal access to quality, affordable health care.

Sincerely,

Gregor F. Bennett, M.A., PA-C
President
American Academy of Physician Assistants