



July 19, 2017

The Honorable Jack Bergman
U.S. House of Representatives
414 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Ann McLane Kuster
U.S. House of Representatives
137 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representatives Bergman and Kuster:

On behalf of the more than 115,000 PAs (physician assistants) represented by the American Academy of PAs (AAPA), I am writing to thank you for your leadership in introducing H.R. 3262, the Grow Our Own Directive (GOOD): PA Employment and Education Act of 2017.

As you are well aware, there is a high vacancy rate for PAs throughout the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA's) healthcare system. A lack of attention to recruitment and retention of PAs by the VA, coupled with the high demand and economic reward for PAs in the private healthcare market, has resulted in a significant challenge for the VA to fill PA positions.

The GOOD Act is a creative, two-pronged approach to improving efforts to recruit and retain a strong PA workforce at the VA. H.R. 3262 will create the GOOD scholarship pilot program to provide a pathway for veterans to become educated as PAs, and to join the ranks of PAs in VA medical facilities. This legislation will also require the VA to establish a national strategic plan to recruit and retain PAs, as well as make a commitment to offering PAs fairer and more competitive compensation that takes into consideration private wages in local markets.

Timely access to quality patient care is one of the most critical issues facing our nation's veterans, and PAs are a key part of any plan for increasing access to quality medical care at VA medical facilities. AAPA is thrilled that you have introduced this bipartisan legislation to increase the PA workforce through the GOOD Pilot Program. This inventive model, along with needed policy improvements, holds great promise for the recruitment and retention of PAs at the VA.

AAPA is very pleased to support the Grow Our Own Directive: PA Employment and Education Act of 2017, and we look forward to working with you to enact it. For further information, please do not hesitate to have your staff contact Tate Heuer, AAPA Vice President, Federal Advocacy, at 571-319-4338 or at theuer@aapa.org.

Sincerely,

Tillie Fowler
Senior Vice President
Advocacy and Government Relations