



December 19, 2016

David J. Shulkin, MD
Under Secretary for Health
Department of Veterans Affairs
810 Vermont Avenue, NW; Room 800
Washington, DC 20420

Dear Dr. Shulkin:

On behalf of more than 108,500 PAs (physician assistants), the American Academy of PAs (AAPA) is writing to request full practice authority be extended to PAs at the Department of Veterans Affairs' (VA). We understand the VA did not wish to include PAs in the recent final rule which granted full practice authority to advanced practice registered nurses (APRNs). AAPA hopes the VA will quickly initiate a similar rulemaking process to grant full practice authority to PAs in order to increase access and quality of care at the VA.

As you are aware, PAs deliver high quality and comprehensive care across a wide range of clinical settings and specialties. PAs represent a highly educated and experienced VA workforce that provides the clinical care veterans desperately need. The VA must take the next logical step and allow PAs full practice authority. It is vital PAs be given the opportunity to effectively and safely provide even more comprehensive levels of care to our nation's veterans.

Ready access to quality medical care continues to be among the most critical issues facing our nation's veterans, and it is one of the VA's most pressing challenges. PAs are an integral part of the VA's solution to providing high quality, timely medical care for veterans – but only if the VA creates a more efficient and effective way to utilize its PA workforce, allowing PAs employed by the VA to practice to the top of their educational preparation and ability.

AAPA stands ready to assist the VA in meeting its challenge to provide veterans with timely access to high quality medical care. Should you have any questions or require additional information regarding AAPA's comments, please do not hesitate to contact Tillie Fowler, SVP Advocacy and Government Relations at 571-319-4551 or tfowler@aapa.org.

Sincerely,

Josanne K. Pagel, MPAS, PA-C, Karuna RMT, DFAAPA
President and Chair of the Board