

# **Legislation to Enhance Access to Patient Care by Physician Assistants in Montana** ***The Montana Accessible and Sustainable Healthcare (MASH) Act***

## **FACT SHEET**

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**House/Senate Bill No. LC2977 by Rep. Denise Hayman** modernizes physician assistant (PA) practice in Montana to ensure that the PA profession is prepared to meet Montana's ongoing healthcare access needs and to protect PAs' collaborative team practice with physicians in today's changing healthcare environment.

### **PROPOSAL**

This bill:

- Allows PAs, physicians, practices, healthcare facilities and hospitals to determine how PAs and physicians practice together
- Requires PAs to collaborate, consult with and/or refer to the appropriate member(s) of the health care team as indicated by the patient's condition and the competencies of the PA and the standard of care.
- Eliminates the statutory requirement that PAs have an agreement with a specific physician in order to practice
- Allows PAs to bill public and private insurers directly for medical services provided by the PA and direct or assign payment to the PA's employer.
- Makes PAs responsible for their own actions
- Supports continued team-based practice

### **REASONS FOR PURSUING CHANGES**

When the PA profession was created, most PAs and physicians worked together in a solo or small private practice. Today, many physicians and PAs work in group practices or facilities where laws that require one-on-one agreements interfere with the ability to maximize the effectiveness of patient care teams. When PAs and physicians aren't encumbered by rigid agreement requirement employers and health systems can be more flexible in creating healthcare teams, which allows them to more effectively meet patient needs and reduce provider burnout. Eliminating the requirement for an agreement with a specific physician will make it easier for PAs to practice in medically underserved communities where there are not enough physicians to care for patients.

### **ABOUT PAs**

PAs are nationally certified and state licensed medical professionals who diagnose illness, develop and manage treatment plans, prescribe medications, and often serve as a patient's principal healthcare provider. With thousands of hours of medical training, PAs are versatile and collaborative team members. PAs practice in every state and in every medical setting and specialty, improving healthcare access and quality.

For more information, contact the Montana Academy of PAs  
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