



**T A P A**  
 TENNESSEE ACADEMY OF  
 PHYSICIAN ASSISTANTS

# PA Pulse

*The heartbeat of TAPA*

*Bridging the Future of Healthcare*

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## **From the President**

Summer is the time when our Tennessee weather becomes unbearably hot and humid. It is also the time of year that marks the end of school. For TAPA, it is the time of year when we get to celebrate our official “wins” for the legislative cycle.

This year we have a lot to celebrate as Gov. Lee signed two of our bills this summer. The first one is the PA licensing compact bill which added Tennessee as the 12<sup>th</sup> state to the licensing compact. I have been honored to get to work on laying the foundation for the compact with several other states since 2019. It has been an amazing process to be a part of as PA board/committee members, state attorneys, and state board administrators came together with national organizations like the Federal Trade Commission (FTC), Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), and the Federation of State Medical Boards (FSMB) to discuss the creation of the PA compact.

I am happy to report that there is a lot of support for our profession at the national level. I, for one, was surprised by this as it often seems like we are overlooked in the healthcare world. It was refreshing to hear federal agencies speak about our value and contributions on the healthcare team.

The next step for the compact is to have a taskforce meeting with all of the states who have now joined the compact and create the rules and pathway for the compact. The timeline of how long this will take is 2-3 years, based on how other health profession compacts have gone in the past. We are hopeful that the PA compact will be on the shorter end of that range since we already have a large database of PA information to work with, which is the NCCPA database. The first meeting of the task force is in September, and I am excited to move forward working on this very important project that moves our profession forward.

TAPA’s other bill recently signed by Gov. Lee is the TMA compromise bill. This bill didn’t get us to full OTP in our state, but it moved the needle closer for PAs in Tennessee. We hope that in the coming years, we can continue to build on the success of this bill as legislators see that PAs are well-trained to provide quality and competent care. Thank you to everyone who participated in lobbying efforts over the past years to see that this legislation was successful. Our state legislators as a whole are much more educated on who we are and our role on the healthcare team than they

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*Mission - TAPA’s mission is to promote accessible, quality healthcare, and to advance the education, profession and practice of physician assistants in Tennessee.*

### *Vision*

*Protecting and empowering the practice of physician assistants in Tennessee.*

*President, continued from page 1*

have ever been. The changes to the PA Practice Act based on this bill are:

The new law puts PA scope of practice in statute, which moves it away from a delegatory scope.

It creates an endorsement that can be placed on a PA's license if they have more than 6000 hours of post-graduate clinical experience.

The endorsement is not automatic – the Board of PAs will adopt rules to create an application and renewal process.

PAs with an endorsement will practice under a collaborative agreement instead of protocols. Collaboration and oversight is established at the practice level, including monthly office visits which means that monthly visits are no longer required at the state level.

The 20% chart review is removed for endorsed PAs, and collaborating physicians are only required to review charts where a Schedule II drug or buprenorphine is prescribed.

All PAs will be authorized to sign death certificates.

In the coming months, the Board of PAs will promulgate rules to implement this new law. Once the rules are adopted, the changes implemented by the new law will take effect.

Respectfully,  
Marie Patterson  
TAPA President

### **TAPA Awards**

TAPA is accepting nominations for the follow awards:

- **PA of the Year**
- **PA Student of the Year**
- **Preceptor of the Year**
- **Educator of the Year**

Nominations are accepted from PAs, PA students, faculty and collaborating physicians. The submission deadline is **July 31, 2024**. Forms can be found at [www.tnpa.com/awards](http://www.tnpa.com/awards).



## **Register today for FallFest**

Join colleagues from across the state and region at TAPA's 48<sup>th</sup> Annual FallFest continuing medical education (CME) conference. The conference will be held Monday, Oct. 7 through Friday, Oct. 11 at the Gatlinburg Convention Center, located at the edge of the Great Smoky Mountains National Park (GSMNP) – the most visited national park in the United States.

This year's conference is focused on **NETWORKING**. To give participants the opportunity to get to know colleagues better, TAPA has several events planned throughout the week.

On Monday afternoon, attend the Welcome Reception and catch up with old friends or make new ones. On Tuesday afternoon, mingle with fellow PAs while enjoying the sights at the Gatlinburg Aquarium - discounted tickets can be purchased on the registration form, and attendees are welcome to bring family and friends to this event.

On Tuesday and Wednesday, TAPA will offer afternoon breakout sessions that will allow conference attendees to break into smaller groups to encourage in-depth discussions of the materials and provide networking opportunities for conference attendees.

### **Workshops**

FallFest will offer two workshops this year. The BLS Certification/Recertification workshop on Tuesday, Oct. 8 and the AHA ACLS Recertification on Thursday, Oct. 10 (new this year!). Workshop space is limited, so attendees are encouraged to register early. And the ACLS course does have prerequisites that must be completed prior to the conference.

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### Student Track/Pre-PA Student Track

TAPA is pleased to once again offer programming specifically geared toward PA students. The festivities will kick off on Sunday, Oct. 6 at a student mixer held from 5-6 p.m. at the Gatlinburg Convention Center.

On Monday, Oct. 7, the Student Track will offer lectures in the morning on topics of interest to students. In the afternoon, PA students will be split into two sessions where they will practice hands-on procedures on suturing, ultrasound techniques, and joint injections in the large multi-purpose room. The day will conclude with TAPA's Annual Challenge Bowl, where teams from PA programs from across the state will compete against one another and show off their clinical knowledge.

### Annual Poster Session

Each year at FallFest, TAPA gives PAs and PA students the opportunity to present their research to their colleagues during the Annual Poster Session. Posters are displayed Monday through Wednesday, and authors are present to talk about and answer questions regarding their work during breakfast from 7-8 a.m. on Tuesday morning.

TAPA's CME Committee is hard at work planning a terrific agenda with top-notch speakers. TAPA always receives high praise for the quality of CME provided at the conference, so we hope you are making plans to join us in October to learn about the newest advances in medicine, including the latest treatment guidelines and therapies. In the Exhibit Hall, enhance your knowledge of the latest products and services available to your patients as you network with exhibitors.

This is truly a "can't miss" event! Registration forms can be found on the TAPA website at [www.tnpa.com/fallfest](http://www.tnpa.com/fallfest).

## Legislative Update

TAPA is pleased to announce that on May 28, Gov. Bill Lee signed HB2318/SB2136 and HB1862/SB1727 into law. Now that they are law, the bills have been assigned Public Chapter numbers. Many PAs have been asking what is next, and when will these new laws take effect. While everyone is excited about the changes, it is important to recognize that we are at the beginning of the implementation process for both pieces of legislation.

[Public Chapter 1018](#) enacts the PA Compact legislation. The Compact needed seven (7) states to adopt enabling legislation and with Tennessee being the 12<sup>th</sup> state, the PA Licensure Compact as been activated.

The next steps of this process include:

1. Forming a Compact Commission;
2. Creating a Compact Data System;
3. Adopting any necessary rules to establish the application process in our state by the Board of PAs; and
4. Opening applications for compact privileges to PAs. It is estimated that this process could take 18-24 months.

At their last meeting, the Board of PAs appointed TAPA President Marie Patterson to serve as Tennessee's commissioner to the Compact Commission. The Commission's first meeting is scheduled for late September.

The PA Licensure Compact website is an excellent resource to track the progress of this initiative and find answers to questions that PAs might have: [www.pacompact.org](http://www.pacompact.org).

[Public Chapter 1042](#) enacts the changes passed by the Legislature to the PA Practice Act. Before any sections of this new law takes effect, rules must be promulgated and adopted.

There are two sets of rules that the Board of PAs will need to adopt/amend. The first set of rules will implement the Endorsement application and process, as well incorporating other sections of the new law. The Board of PAs expects to begin their work on these rules at their September meeting.

*Legislative, continued from page 3*

The second set of rules will specifically address “collaborative agreements” that PAs with the endorsement will practice under instead of the traditional protocol. The initial rules addressing collaborative agreements will be promulgated and adopted by a task force made up of one (1) member from the board of medical examiners; one (1) member from the board of osteopathic examination; one (1) member from the board of pediatric medical examiners; and three (3) members from the board of physician assistants.

The Board of PAs appointed their three members at their last meeting, and the other three boards will be appointing their members at upcoming meetings. Once the task force is established, hopefully by this fall, they will begin their work.

The rulemaking process can be lengthy, with an estimated timeline of 12-18 months.

### **Other Laws of Interest**

[PC 0491](#) – Extends the Board of Physician Assistants to June 30, 2030.

[PC 808](#) – Make changes to buprenorphine prescribing laws. The new law increases from four (4) to five (5) the number of PAs or APRNs that a collaborating physician can supervise. It also increases the patient limit from fifty (50) to one hundred (100) or fewer patients at any given time. Finally, it removes references to the DATA 2000 waiver.

[PC 893](#) – Establishes the “Healthcare Provider Advertising Law”. Under this law, individuals are prohibited from using specialist or subspecialist titles in advertising materials unless they are a physician who has completed a postgraduate residency or fellowship in that field.

PAs are reminded that under their practice act, they are permitted to use the titles of Physician Assistant, PA or PA-C. PAs are cautioned against tacking a specialty title onto their title in advertising materials, such as “Dermatology PA” or “Cardiology PA” as that could be seen as a violation of this new law.

Members with questions can reach out to the TAPA office for further assistance.

## **2024 AAPA House of Delegates Reports**

The AAPA’s House of Delegates (HOD) articulates the shared values, beliefs, and professional wisdom of PAs from all corners of the PA profession through the enactment of policies and adoption of position statements on behalf of the profession.

The 2024 House of Delegates (HOD) Meeting occurred Friday, May 17 through Sunday, May 19 in Houston, TX. Representing Tennessee were Chief Delegate Brendan Lucas, Sarah Murawski, Jodi Robbe and Natalie Stafford. Following are reports from your delegates.

The AAPA has released the 2024 Summary of Actions which details the actions on each resolution - whether the resolution was adopted, adopted as amended, or rejected. [Click here to download a copy of this report.](#)

### **Chief Delegate Brendan Lucas**

My name is Brendan Lucas and I had the ultimate pleasure of serving as the Chief Delegate for the Tennessee delegation. This House session was very constructive and your Tennessee delegates were very active ensuring all Tennessee PAs were represented and voices were heard.

Successes this year included a Tennessee co-authored resolution charging the development of a task force to investigate AAPAs governance structure and assess whether the current structure meets the needs of the broader membership. Rest assured - Tennessee delegates are working hard for YOU to ensure your needs are met. Our Tennessee delegates were active in submitting amendments and collaborating with other delegations to make things make sense for AAPA.

If you have any questions related to the 2024 House of Delegates meeting, please contact me at [brendan.k.lucas@gmail.com](mailto:brendan.k.lucas@gmail.com).

### **Delegate Sarah Murawski**

Hello Tennessee PAs. I am Sarah Murawski, one of your elected House of Delegates representatives. This is my second term serving

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*HOD, continued from page 4*

the state of Tennessee. I served during COVID for my first term and then, again last year when the AAPA conference was in Nashville. I was also lucky enough to have been elected to the student delegation as a PA student and served alongside Tennessee's Chief Delegate, Brendan Lucas.

The AAPA House of Delegates is one of my favorite ways to serve the profession. The passion and ingenuity of the PAs in the HOD is so inspiring. I have been blessed to have been a member of this body when we passed Optimal Team Practice as a strategic goal for the PA profession. I have also been present for the voting of the PA title change. To be a part of these profession altering discussions and decisions is truly invigorating.

As a part of your delegation, I feel that it is important that I am familiar and understand all the resolutions I will be voting on. However, as a delegation, we often divide up the resolutions for the purpose of leading the discussion within our delegation. This year, many of the resolutions I oversaw were procedural in nature and updated language within AAPA policy. One resolution of note was one co-sponsored by our delegation that asked the AAPA to create a task force to evaluate the governance structure of the organization to ensure it is serving its members effectively. This evaluation of the governance structure included voting transparency within the HOD and evaluation of regional leadership within the AAPA Board of Directors.

My experience within the 2024 HOD has been incredible. I always enjoy serving Tennessee PAs in this capacity. It is a great joy of my PA career to be able to represent PAs at the national conference. I have learned so much from many of you about how these policies affect your practice, your PA programs, your PA teams as administrators. I hope to continue learning from you and from our PA colleagues across the country as we move this profession forward in the changing healthcare landscape.

### **Delegate Jodi Robbe**

I am Jodi Robbe, and I managed resolutions B-22 through C-09, which were considered and deliberated on by the AAPA House of Delegates in Houston, Texas from May 17<sup>th</sup> through the 19<sup>th</sup>.



***Tennessee delegates Brendan Lucas, Jodi Robbe, Natalie Stafford, and Sarah Murawski at the 2024 AAPA House of Delegates.***

These resolutions included B-22, which was a proposal to include the HOD officers and officials of PAEA, NCCPA and ARC PA in title change work. This resolution was pulled by the author prior to the HOD.

The remainder of the resolutions were assigned to Reference Committee C, which generally considers resolutions that are more policy oriented and do not involve a change in the bylaws of the organization. Two resolutions affirming the role of PAs in maternal health passed on the consent agenda, without any debate. Two policy papers, one on PA well being and one on Genetics and Genomics were updated and passed on the consent agenda as well.

A resolution supporting PAs ability to seek mental health services outside of employer health networks also passed on the consent agenda. A resolution regarding the health impacts of climate change was robustly debated, before an amended version passed.

There was broad support for resolutions removing race as a proxy for genetic or biologic ancestry and one making language changes to a policy opposing discrimination against patients based on social determinants of health. Finally a resolution opposing criminalizing patients for seeking care that is within the standard of care passed after debate.

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### **Delegate Natalie Stafford**

I have served in the AAPA House of Delegates since 2022. This year, I attended as an alternate delegate and as some of our delegates were not able to attend, I was a credentialed delegate in their place.

The House of Delegates is made up of representatives from state organizations as well as constituent organizations of the AAPA and meets annually to review, discuss and vote on resolutions to update and change the policy of the AAPA. The policies cover a wide range of topics but can have huge impacts on the way we practice as PAs. In fact, this year I met the PA who first brought forth a resolution to make the change from a 6-year certification to a 10-year certification. In the end, it took several years for the idea to be accepted and passed, but this is the kind of important work that takes place in the HOD.

I managed resolutions C10 through C19, which covered various topics ranging from violence against patients and providers to human trafficking to AED availability at school sporting events. Oftentimes, resolutions are put forward to update language or information, as with Resolution C18, which updated a policy paper, Human Trafficking in the United States. Other resolutions, such as C12 and C14 amend language to reduce redundancy in policy.

Of the resolutions I managed, only three did not pass on the consent agenda (meaning they were pulled for further discussion and review). These were C10, C18 and C19. Amendments were offered by the reference committee and were all adopted. The most notable was C10, which dealt with criminalization of medical care. During discussion in the House of Delegates, it was noted that "standard of care" is legally determined, not medically determined. Therefore, language was altered to "evidence-based care" to emphasize that AAPA opposes criminalization of provision of medical care that is appropriate and evidence-based as determined through the practice of medicine, not through legislative terms.

I am incredibly grateful to have served as a delegate for a third year and proud to represent the Tennessee Academy.

## **2024 TAPA PAC Contributors**

*(Received Jan. 1-June 30, 2024)*

If you haven't yet contributed to the PAC this year, please visit [www.tnopa.com/political-action-committee](http://www.tnopa.com/political-action-committee) to make either a one-time donation or sign up for monthly donations.

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