

[Your Address]

[Date]

The Honorable [Legislator's Name]
State Capitol
201 West Capitol Avenue
Jefferson City, Missouri 65101

Dear Representative/Senator [Legislator's Last Name]:

As a physician who supervises physician assistants (PAs) and resident of your district, I urge you to support HB 497 to assure that Missouri physician-PA teams have the flexibility they need to meet patients' needs. Like physicians in every other state, Missouri physicians should have the option of supervising PAs using telecommunications when it is clinically appropriate.

PAs like those I work with have demonstrated their competence and skill in decades of practice in Missouri. PAs practice in physician-directed teams and, with appropriate supervision, provide care that is comparable in quality to that of physicians. They have been trained to work in close consultation with physicians, but the physical presence of a supervising physician is not required for all patients. In fact, physician-PA teams can deliver care most effectively when each professional sees those patients most appropriate to his or her skill level. For example, with off-site supervision by telecommunication, PAs can treat routine illnesses in the office while I attend to patients with more complex conditions at the hospital. Without off-site supervision, PAs are prevented from treating even those diseases well within their training and experience if the physician is unexpectedly called away.

Missouri's Board of Healing Arts has recognized the key role that PAs have in delivering care under off-site supervision. The Board has allowed PAs to practice with off-site supervision in areas of the state that have a shortage of health professionals. Now, however, this authority will end unless the legislature acts. In order to protect health care access in these shortage areas and give all of Missouri's physician-PA teams the flexibility needed to practice effectively, I urge you to support HB 497 and protect physicians' option of supervising PAs by telecommunications when clinically appropriate.

Thank you for your attention to this issue that will directly impact health care access in many parts of Missouri. Please feel free to contact me if I can tell you more about how this legislation would affect my practice or address any concerns you have. Thank you for your support.

Sincerely,

[Your Name]