



Economic Impact Analysis Virginia Department of Planning and Budget

**18 VAC 85-50 – Regulations Governing the Practice of Physician Assistants
Department of Health Professions
April 28, 2011**

Summary of the Proposed Amendments to Regulation

The Board of Medicine (Board) proposes to amend its Regulations Governing the Practice of Physician Assistants to eliminate language that requires supervising physicians to see returning patients “not less frequently than every fourth visit for a continuing illness”.

Result of Analysis

Benefits likely outweigh costs for implementing these proposed changes.

Estimated Economic Impact

Current regulations require that physicians who supervise physician assistants “see and evaluate” returning patients who are being treated for an ongoing health issue “not less frequently than every fourth visit”. The Board believes this rule is too restrictive on physicians and physician assistants and may adversely impact patients, particularly patients with chronic illnesses, who may not be able to as easily schedule doctor’s appointments at times that are convenient and at intervals that are conducive to maintaining treatment for their illnesses. The Board proposes to eliminate this requirement and, instead, require that the written practice agreement between physician assistants and their supervising physicians specify when a physician would step in to evaluate a patient. For instance, such an agreement might specify that the physician would reevaluate a patient if his or her symptoms changed or worsened.

This change will benefit physicians and physician assistants who will have more flexibility to plan office hours and patient visits more efficiently. The delineation of duties that will be written into the practice agreements between these parties will likely protect quality of

patient care so patients will likely not incur any costs on account of these changes. Patients may, instead, benefit if these changes allow them to more easily schedule appointments.

Businesses and Entities Affected

The Department of Health Professions (DHP) reports that the Board currently regulates 1,781 physician assistants. All of these individuals, as well as their supervisors and patients will be affected by these proposed regulations.

Localities Particularly Affected

No locality will be particularly affected by this proposed regulatory action.

Projected Impact on Employment

This proposed regulatory action is unlikely to have any effect on employment in the Commonwealth.

Effects on the Use and Value of Private Property

These proposed regulatory changes are unlikely to affect the use or value of private property in the Commonwealth.

Small Businesses: Costs and Other Effects

No small business is likely to incur any costs on account of this regulatory action.

Small Businesses: Alternative Method that Minimizes Adverse Impact

No small business is likely to incur any costs on account of this regulatory action.

Real Estate Development Costs

This regulatory action will likely have no effect on real estate development costs in the Commonwealth.

Legal Mandate

The Department of Planning and Budget (DPB) has analyzed the Board the economic impact of this proposed regulation in accordance with Section 2.2-4007.H of the Administrative Process Act and Executive Order Number 36 (06). Section 2.2-4007.H requires that such economic impact analyses include, but need not be limited to, the projected number of businesses or other entities to whom the regulation would apply, the identity of any localities and types of

businesses or other entities particularly affected, the projected number of persons and employment positions to be affected, the projected costs to affected businesses or entities to implement or comply with the regulation, and the impact on the use and value of private property. Further, if the proposed regulation has adverse effect on small businesses, Section 2.2-4007.H requires that such economic impact analyses include (i) an identification and estimate of the number of small businesses subject to the regulation; (ii) the projected reporting, recordkeeping, and other administrative costs required for small businesses to comply with the regulation, including the type of professional skills necessary for preparing required reports and other documents; (iii) a statement of the probable effect of the regulation on affected small businesses; and (iv) a description of any less intrusive or less costly alternative methods of achieving the purpose of the regulation. The analysis presented above represents DPB's best estimate of these economic impacts.