

## **Time for Oregon to Modernize**

### **Scott Beyer, PA-C**

Twenty-five years ago, the physician assistant (PA) profession in Oregon was perceived as “progressive.” Since then, the number of PAs practicing in Oregon has increased while the PA Medical Practice Act has become outdated. At the same time, other states have updated and improved their PA laws. It’s time for Oregon to catch up and allow PAs to practice at the top of their licensure. Senate Bill (SB) 224 was introduced to the 2011 Oregon Legislative Assembly last week and will do just that – modernize Oregon’s PA statute.

The goal of SB 224, as developed by Oregon Society of Physician Assistants (OSPA) Legislative Committee and Task Forces, is to improve the administrative role that the [Oregon Medical Board](#) (OMB) plays in the PA application process. Currently, a PA must first secure employment and then apply for a license, which can delay a PA’s ability to fully practice by weeks or months. SB 224 amends the PA statute to allow a new PA in Oregon to be licensed through the OMB before they have secured employment.

In addition, the bill would change the practice description submitted to the OMB so that the Supervising Physician and the PA will create their standard practice agreement. The agreement would then be filed at the place of employment. Today, PAs have to go before the OMB to make a change to their practice description and too often are being denied privileges for procedures they have been doing for years. As of 2011, there are only three states that have the state medical board fully approve a practice description.

### **Want to know how you can help?**

- OSPA lobby day is February 24 at the State Capitol in Salem – plan to be there! The day will be spent meeting with legislators and advocating for SB 224. Please visit the [OSPA website](#) to register today; OSPA will set up appointments for you with legislators, provide breakfast and lunch and provide you a parking pass. You’ll receive talking points and information, but speaking as a practicing PA or student anxious to start your profession will carry you most of the way.
- As SB 224 works its way through Oregon’s legislative process, OSPA will need your help at the grassroots level. We ask that you call your legislator and express your support, encourage your supervising physician to write a letter of support and let us know if you’re available to testify at the legislature. A call to action strategy is being developed – we need your story to be told.

During the 2011 legislative session, the OSPA legislative committee will also follow other relevant bills with the support and guidance of our lobbyist at Vox Public Relations Public Affairs (formerly The Ulum Group). If you hear about something or have legislative concerns, please contact OSPA at (503) 650-5864 or by e-mail at [ospa@oregonpa.org](mailto:ospa@oregonpa.org).

These changes are exciting and will allow PAs to practice safely and to the full extent of their education and license, but it will only be possible with your help. Get involved today!