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Contact: Micah Roderick 217.528.9970

## **PATIENTS FIRST! LEGISLATION WILL MODERNIZE PA PROFESSION AND IMPROVE HEALTH CARE**

SPRINGFIELD -- The Patients First! legislative proposal introduced in the General Assembly will result in improved medical care in underserved and rural areas of Illinois by modernizing the role of physician assistants (PAs) in practicing medicine and eliminate outdated bureaucratic requirements.

“The Illinois Academy of PAs wants to thank Leader Murphy and Representative Willis – and all the other cosponsors – for acknowledging the need for Illinois’ PA laws to be updated. Patients First! will update our laws to reflect the critical roles our 3,000-plus PA professionals in Illinois perform in medical teams,” said Anita See, president of the Illinois Academy of PAs.

The bipartisan legislation (Senate Bill 145 and House Bill 1826) is chiefly sponsored by Senator Laura Murphy, D-Des Plaines, the Senate’s deputy majority leader; and Rep. Kathleen Willis, D-Northlake. Patients First! is supported by organizations including the Southern Illinois University School of Medicine.

“PAs providing medical care in Veterans Affairs hospitals and in hospitals across the country already practice with updated laws that accurately reflect modern health care,” Murphy said. “Minnesota and many other states are removing bureaucratic barriers to practice for physician assistants, and it’s definitely time for Illinois law to catch up with changes in the way providers care for their patients.”

Willis said, “With the Governor’s executive order for COVID-19, PAs have had to cross into different specialties to perform life-saving services to critically ill patients. PAs have practiced medicine at exemplary levels in Illinois since the pandemic began and it’s clearly the time to modernize state laws to reflect their current role in medical teams.”

The bill does the following:

- Eliminates required bureaucratic notifications and specific “written” agreements. However, PAs will still need to collaborate with physicians in order to practice and the legislation does not call for independent practice.
- Scope of practice is determined at the practice level by the education, training and experience of both the collaborating physician and PA.
- Allows PAs to have a seat at the table in front of state regulators and self-govern the profession.

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