



AAPA Statement for the Record to the House Committee on Education and Workforce's Subcommittee on Workforce Protection on Hearing: "FECA Reform and Oversight: Prioritizing Workers, Protecting Taxpayer Dollars"

May 6, 2025

Subcommittee Chairman Mackenzie, Subcommittee Ranking Member Omar, Chairman Walberg, Ranking Member Scott, and Members of the Committee on Education and Workforce:

On behalf of the approximately 190,000 physician associates/physician assistants (PAs) throughout the United States, the American Academy of Physician Associates (AAPA) thanks the Committee for your leadership and continued emphasis on reforming the Federal Employees Compensation Act (FECA). We would also particularly like to thank Chairman Walberg as well as Representative Courtney for their reintroduction of the Improving Access to Workers' Compensation for Injured Federal Workers Act (H.R. 3170), and for the Subcommittee's inclusion of the bill in its hearing. This bill is an important step towards better access to high-quality, cost-efficient care, and improved continuity of care.

The Improving Access to Workers' Compensation for Injured Federal Workers Act passed the House of Representatives during the 117th Congress with strong bipartisan support. However, it was not taken up in the Senate. The legislation was also passed by this committee without opposition in both the 117th and 118th Congress.

As you know, United States federal and postal employees receive workers compensation coverage for employment-related injuries and disease through the Federal Employees Compensation Act (FECA). However, FECA does not cover medical care overseen by PAs or nurse practitioners (NPs) within the current definition of "medical, surgical, and hospital services..." This means that once a federal or postal employee is injured on the job, they can no longer receive healthcare from a PA, even if that PA is their primary care provider (PCP) through their federal health insurance program.

This undue and unnecessary restriction negatively impacts our federal workforce, especially those in rural and underserved areas. PAs provide high-quality healthcare and are recognized providers in Medicare, Medicaid, and nearly every state and federal healthcare program, including state workers' compensation programs. PAs are included in the definition of an "acceptable medical source" by the Social Security Administration and thousands of PAs are federal employees themselves and practice within the Department of

Veterans Affairs, the Department of Defense, the Public Health Service, and Indian Health Services.

FECA is an outlier among federal programs because it does not recognize the critical role PAs play in our healthcare system. PAs practice in all medical and surgical specialties in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, U.S. territories, and the uniformed services. PAs provide high-quality, cost-effective medical care in every specialty and setting, undertake rigorous education and clinical training, and are well established as trusted medical professionals.

The Improving Access to Workers' Compensation for Injured Federal Workers Act would help ensure that all federal employees have access to high-quality healthcare from the provider of their choice and would align FECA with state workers compensation programs to recognize PAs and NPs as covered providers. All Americans deserve timely access to quality healthcare, especially our federal workforce in rural and underserved areas who already face challenges in the daily function of their job serving this great nation.

We strongly support this critical legislation and appreciate the committee's efforts on behalf of patients across the nation.