


BARBARA DITTRICH

STATE REPRESENTATIVE • 99th ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

Assembly Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety
Rep. Dittrich Testimony on Assembly Bill 273
June 3, 2025

Thank you, Chairman Spiros and members of the Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety, for hearing testimony on Assembly Bill (AB) 273 today. This bill adds the chair of the Physician Assistant Examining Board, or their designee, to the Controlled Substances Board. I would like to thank Senator James for working with me on this commonsense and forward-thinking piece of legislation to help curb prescription drug abuse.

My commitment to combating prescription drug abuse is evident in my work on SB 68, now Act 5, which reextended the Prescription Drug Monitoring Program. This law continues oversight, enabling providers like physician assistants (PAs) to make informed prescribing decisions, balancing patient care with efforts to prevent misuse.

PAs are vital healthcare providers with prescriptive authority for controlled substances, serving critical roles. Despite this, they lack representation on the Controlled Substances Board, which shapes prescribing policies. AB 273 ensures PAs' expertise informs regulations, promoting patient safety and access to care without unnecessary barriers.

Including a PA representative aligns with modern healthcare trends, where PAs are increasingly essential due to provider shortages. Their insights will help craft effective policies that combat abuse while supporting legitimate patient needs, complementing the goals of Act 5.

AB 273 is a straightforward step to ensure the Controlled Substances Board reflects today's healthcare landscape. I urge your support to enhance its ability to create informed regulations.

Again, I thank you for your time and consideration. I am happy to answer any questions.



June 3rd, 2025

Representative Spiros, Chair

Representative Piwowarczyk, Vice-Chair

Members of the Assembly Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety

Testimony on 2025 Assembly Bill 273

Relating to: the membership of the Controlled Substances Board.

Thank you, Chairman Spiros, and other members of the committee for listening to my testimony today. The bill before you is an important update in our state's fight against the opioid epidemic and goal of promoting the safe, responsible use of controlled substances.

In the pursuit of these objectives, Wisconsin created the Controlled Substance Board, bringing together state leaders and medical professionals. This multidisciplinary board plays a vital role in safeguarding public health, guiding prescribing practices, and preventing misuse. Today, the Controlled Substance Board is responsible for regulating controlled substances and overseeing the Prescription Drug Monitoring Program.

Assembly Bill 273 adds a physician assistant to the current nine-person board. Physician Assistants are highly trained medical professionals who play a vital role in providing high-quality, team-based care across Wisconsin. As prescribers and frontline providers, they encounter the complexities of prescribing controlled substances on a daily basis. PA insight is invaluable to informed decision making on these issues. This bill ensures that the PA profession is represented by adding the chairperson of the Physician Assistant Affiliated Credentialing Board to the Controlled Substances Board. This update will strengthen interdisciplinary collaboration, enhance public health efforts, and ensure the Board benefits from the perspective of all major prescribing professions.

This bill will make a straightforward and meaningful improvement to Wisconsin's efforts to keep our citizens safe. Thank you all again for your consideration.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Jesse James".

Senator Jesse James

23rd Senate District

Sen.James@legis.wisconsin.gov



To: Chairperson John Spiros
Members, Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety

From: Eric Elliot, DMSc, PA-C

Date: June 3, 2025

Re: **Support for Assembly Bill 273 – Membership of the Controlled Substances Board**

Good afternoon, my name is Eric Elliot. Thank you, Chairperson Spiros and committee members, for the opportunity to testify today in support of Assembly Bill 273. I've been a PA for almost 21 years and have a doctorate in Medical Science from the University of Lynchburg. I am currently practicing at Allegiance Medical Group. We have several clinics throughout Wisconsin in Madison, Wales, and Green Bay, among others. I also serve as the co-chairperson of the Legislative and Government Affairs Committee of the Wisconsin Academy of Physician Assistants (WAPA) and I'm here on behalf of WAPA.

WAPA represents physician assistants practicing in Wisconsin. Briefly regarding PAs, over 4,600 PAs practice in Wisconsin, working with physicians and other healthcare professionals to provide quality, cost-effective care to patients across the state. While PAs work in all areas of medicine, every PA is initially educated as a primary care provider. A PA's practice may include serving as primary care provider or specialty providers performing physical exams, diagnosing and treating illnesses, assisting in surgery, and prescribing medication, including controlled substances.

Like our colleagues who are pharmacists, physicians, dentists, and nurses, PAs play a role in helping to combat prescription drug abuse in Wisconsin and we work with our colleagues to reduce the misuse of prescription drugs. Currently, the chairperson of our regulatory board is not a member of the Controlled Substances Board but has been welcome to attend as a member of the public. Since April of 2023, thanks to bipartisan legislation, like the other healthcare professionals represented on the Controlled Substances Board, PAs now regulate and discipline their own profession under the auspices of the Physician Assistant Affiliated Credentialing Board. As such, we respectfully request the chairperson of our credentialing board join her colleagues on the Controlled Substances Board so PAs, too, may play a more formal role in helping to reduce prescription drug abuse in Wisconsin.

On behalf of WAPA, I respectfully ask you to support AB 273. I'm happy to try to answer any questions.

To: Chairperson John Spiros
Members, Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety

From: Jennifer Jarrett, PA-c, MPAS

Date: June 3, 2025

Re: **Please Support Assembly Bill 273, Membership of the Controlled Substances Board**

Good Afternoon Chairperson Spiros. My name is Jennifer Jarrett and I serve as the chairperson of the Physician Assistant Affiliated Credentialing Board. I'm here to testify in my personal capacity, that is, on behalf of myself in support of Assembly Bill 273. I'm a PA and I practice at UW Health, specializing in Cardiovascular medicine. I've been practicing for more than 25 years, providing both inpatient and outpatient health care.

The Physician Assistant affiliated Credentialing Board licenses, oversees, and has disciplinary authority over PAs who practice in Wisconsin. Under Wisconsin law, physician assistants may practice in ambulatory care, acute care, long-term care, home care, or other settings as a primary, specialty, or surgical care provider. Further PAs may serve as a patient's primary care or specialty care provider. PAs may prescribe prescription drugs, including controlled substances.

Because PAs may prescribe controlled substances, we work with our professional colleagues to help ensure controlled substances are appropriately prescribed and their use is monitored. We do our best to ensure these prescription drugs are not abused or misdirected. The PA Board has the authority to oversee and discipline Wisconsin PAs, including for failing to comply with the Prescription Drug Monitoring Program or for potentially suspicious or dangerous conduct or practices relating to controlled substances. Although PAs are not currently a member of the Controlled Substances Board, I and other members of our board have been attending Controlled Substances Board meetings, but only as a member of the public.

I'm here to request that the Chairperson of the Physician Assistant Affiliated Credentialing Board join our colleagues on the Controlled Substances Board, so PAs too, may play a stronger part in reducing prescription drug abuse in Wisconsin.

Please support AB 273. With that, I'm available to answer any questions.