

February 26, 2018

RE: Senate Bill No. 108

Dear Senator Giessel:

I am writing on behalf of the American Association of Medical Assistants (AAMA) and the Alaska Medical Assistants Society (Alaska MAS), an affiliate of the AAMA, in regard to Senate Bill No. 108. In addition to other provisions, this legislation addresses the certification of medical assistants.

Because of our commitment to patient safety and the efficient provision of health care to the people of Alaska, the Alaska MAS and the AAMA support clarification of the legal authority of physicians to delegate appropriate tasks to knowledgeable and competent medical assistants working under their supervision and direction. We also support the Alaska State Medical Board (Board) being directed by statute to issue a certification to medical assistants who have met educational, credentialing, and any other requirements determined by the Board.

However, we have serious concerns about the title of these medical assistants being “certified medical assistants” and “C.M.A.s” or “CMAs.” Our concerns are based on the fact that this phrase and these initialisms could result in confusion between individuals holding the CMA (AAMA) credential issued by the Certifying Board of the AAMA and individuals who are awarded the medical assisting certification to be issued by the Alaska State Medical Board.

The American Association of Medical Assistants owns Registration No. 2,509,034 issued by the United States Patent and Trademark Office for the mark “Certified Medical Assistant®.” The registration is on the Principal Register, and is registered for use by persons authorized by the Certifying Board of the AAMA (Certifying Board) to indicate that the medical assistant services performed or to be performed have been or will be performed by a person whose services meet the standard of competence in the medical assisting profession, such individual having met certain educational standards in the medical assistant profession set by the Certifying Board and having passed the CMA (AAMA) Certification Examination administered by the Certifying Board. (The National Board of Medical Examiners (NBME) assists the Certifying Board by providing psychometric services in test construction, delivery, and analysis.) The AAMA first bestowed its “Certified Medical Assistant®” credential and authorized the use of the initials “CMA” as an abbreviation therefor in 1965 and has used those marks continually since that time throughout the United States.

The Alaska Medical Assistants Society and the AAMA suggest that references in the bill to “certified medical assistant” be replaced by “medical assistant-certified,” and that the initialism “C.M.A.” be replaced by “MA-C.” This is the nomenclature reflected in the Washington State statutes and rules.

Thank you for your consideration, Senator Giessel. Please let us know how we can be of assistance.

Very truly yours,

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