



The Hospital + Healthsystem
Association of Pennsylvania

Leading for Better Health

On Behalf of Arielle Chortanoff Via Email—February 3, 2025

Dear Members of the House Health Committee:

On behalf of more than 235 members statewide, The Hospital and Healthsystem Association of Pennsylvania (HAP) writes today in support of House Bill 157, Printer's No. 381, sponsored by Chairwoman Rapp, and House Bill 409, Printer's No. 99, sponsored by Representative Kosierowski, ahead of the scheduled Health Committee meeting on Wednesday, February 5, 2025. HAP respectfully asks for a "yes" vote on both pieces of legislation on behalf of Pennsylvania's hospitals and health systems.

House Bill 157—Grant Program for Education Debt for Providers in Rural Counties

HB 157 establishes a program through the Department of Health through which hospitals, Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHC), and birthing centers in rural counties and designated medically underserved areas may apply for grants to pay the educational debt owed by licensed physicians, registered nurses, and licensed practical nurses.

The commonwealth does not currently have enough medical providers to meet Pennsylvanians' growing health care needs leaving access to care in rural communities hanging in the balance. HAP's most recent [Hospital Workforce Survey](#), released January 2024, revealed more about workforce shortages across the state:

- Average vacancy rates for nursing support staff and registered nurses in rural hospitals were 28 percent and 26 percent, respectively, compared to 19 percent and 14 percent statewide.
- Sixty-two of Pennsylvania's 67 counties are full or partial Health Professional Shortage Areas for primary care.
- Fifty-three counties have full or partial shortages of mental health providers.
- Forty-seven percent of women in rural counties live more than 30 minutes from a birthing hospital, with least 19 rural Pennsylvania hospitals transitioning away from providing obstetric care in the past two decades—with the lack of access to obstetricians and gynecologists (OB/GYN) as one of the most cited barriers.

Challenges within the hospital community are amplified in rural communities as rural hospitals are often the only point of access to health care in their communities, provide care for fewer patients and in a less populated area of the state, and typically rely more heavily on below-cost reimbursements from Medicare and Medicaid.

HAP supports House Bill 157 and providing rural hospitals, FQHCs, and birthing centers with an important recruitment incentive and retention mechanism and urges a "yes" vote in support of the commonwealth's rural hospitals.



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House Bill 409—Communication of Patient Test Results

House Bill 409 amends Act 112 of 2018 and seeks to make positive changes to existing requirements related to the communication of test results to patients following diagnostic imaging services, ultimately clarifying, and simplifying the communication of test outcomes to patients.

HAP believes that HB 409 will achieve better outcomes by:

- Removing ambiguous language related to “significant abnormality.”
- Providing patients notice at the time of service that they will be receiving their test results in their electronic health record or that they can ask the provider to mail the results to them.
- Allowing providers to hold some potentially life-altering test results for one full business day prior to posting to a patient’s electronic health record.

HAP supports House Bill 409 and the proposed changes which collectively clarify and streamline how important information following medical imaging testing is communicated to patients, and on behalf of Pennsylvania hospitals, respectfully ask for your **“yes”** vote.

Please contact [me](#) or [Sarah Lawver](#), HAP’s senior director state legislative advocacy with any questions.

Arielle Chortanoff

Vice President, State Advocacy
The Hospital and Healthsystem Association of Pennsylvania
30 North Third Street, Suite 600
Harrisburg, PA 17101
W: (717) 561-5350