



April 14, 2025

Members of the Committee on Health
North Carolina House of Representatives
643 Legislative Office Building
Raleigh, NC 27601

Dear Members of the Committee on Health,

On behalf of the undersigned organizations, we urge you to support HB 696. The enactment of this legislation is a significant step toward ensuring health care transparency. This bill would provide clarity to patients who are seeking care from a dermatologist or other physician by limiting who can use the title "physician" in any title, advertisement, or other communication with the public. Additionally, the bill would limit the use of the term "dermatologist" to individuals who practice medicine.

Dermatologists diagnose and treat more than 3,000 diseases, including skin cancer, psoriasis, immunologic diseases and many genetic disorders. As physicians who are on the front lines fighting skin cancer and treating numerous skin diseases, we believe all physicians and non-physician clinicians should identify or disclose their degree or field of study, board certification (if any), and licensure to each patient.

Our patients have the right to know the credentials and the level of training of that person making the important medical diagnosis, pushing medications into an intravenous line, using a scalpel, or pointing a laser at their face, torso, arms, or legs. In a clinical setting, it is often impossible for patients to know whether the person providing their care is a physician, nurse, physician assistant, pharmacist, dentist, or dental hygienist. This creates a great deal of confusion for patients.

A recent survey conducted by the American Medical Association confirms increasing patient confusion about the education and training of physicians and non-physician clinicians, and who is delivering their care. The survey revealed:

- 39% of patients believe a nurse with a “doctor of nursing practice” degree is a medical doctor.
- 55% of patients believe it is difficult to identify who is a licensed medical doctor and who is not by reading what services they offer, their title and other licensing credentials in advertising or other marketing materials.

Additionally, the survey reinforces that patients want more transparency regarding the credentials and qualifications of physicians and non-physician clinicians:

- 88% percent of patients believe only medical doctors should be permitted to use the title “physician;”
- 79% percent of patients support state legislation to require all health care advertising materials to clearly designate the level of education, skills and training of all health care professionals promoting their services.

Many patients are reluctant to ask about one’s training and certification during a visit. Patient confusion will likely be exacerbated as physician assistants, nurse practitioners, naturopaths, pharmacists, estheticians and other non-physician clinicians attempt to expand their scope of practice. HB 696 would provide patients with the necessary information concerning who is delivering their health care. For further information, please contact Lisa Albany, director of state policy for the American Academy of Dermatology Association, at lalbany@aad.org or (202) 842-3555.

Sincerely,

North Carolina Dermatology Association
American Academy of Dermatology Association
American Society for Dermatologic Surgery Association