

June 7, 2022

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi  
H-232, The Capitol  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy  
H-204, The Capitol  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

**Subject: Letter of opposition to H.R. 6087**

Dear Speaker Pelosi and Leader McCarthy:

On behalf of more than 39,000 orthopaedic surgeons and residents represented by the American Association of Orthopaedic Surgeons (AAOS), I am writing to express our opposition to H.R. 6087, the “Improving Access to Workers’ Compensation for Injured Federal Workers Act.” This legislation would inappropriately permit nurse practitioners (NPs) and physician assistants (PAs) to diagnose, prescribe, treat, and certify an injury and extent of disability for purposes of compensating federal workers under the Federal Employees’ Compensation Act. Passage of this legislation would effectively remove physicians from the care team for these types of injuries.

The AAOS strongly supports physician-led, team-based care, and believes that properly designed and efficiently run workers compensation programs can provide high-quality health care to injured workers and minimize their disabilities. Because many occupational injuries are musculoskeletal in nature, orthopaedic surgeons play a critical role in the workers’ compensation system both at the state and federal level.<sup>1</sup> In fact, nearly one third of permanent workplace disabilities result from musculoskeletal disorders.<sup>2</sup>

Current law prohibits non-physicians from making these determinations and reserves this role to physicians who have the education, training, and expertise to make these evaluations. Orthopaedic surgeons, for example, have completed four years of medical school and five years of residency training. Many also pursue board certification and additional fellowship training to subspecialize in areas such as foot and ankle surgery, trauma, pediatric orthopaedics, spine, reconstructive joint surgery, sports medicine, hand surgery, or orthopaedic oncology. While NPs and PAs play a critical role in our nation’s health care system and are key members of the care team, these health care professionals are not interchangeable with physicians.

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<sup>1</sup> Daniels, Alan H. MD; Kuris, Eren O. MD; Palumbo, Mark A. MD The Role of the Orthopaedic Surgeon in Workers’ Compensation Cases, Journal of the American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons: March 2017 - Volume 25 - Issue 3 - p e45-e52; doi: 10.5435/JAAOS-D-16-00499

<sup>2</sup> Franklin GM, Wickizer TM, Coe NB, Fulton-Kehoe D: Workers’ compensation: Poor quality health care and the growing disability problem in the United States. Am J Ind Med 2015;58(3):245-251.25331746



AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF  
ORTHOPAEDIC SURGEONS

Thank you for your consideration of this important matter, and we strongly encourage you to protect the health and safety of injured federal workers and oppose H.R. 6087.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "F H Savoie MD".

Felix H. Savoie, III, MD, FAAOS  
President, AAOS

cc: Kevin J. Bozic, MD, MBA, FAAOS, First Vice-President, AAOS  
Paul Tornetta III, MD, FAAOS, Second Vice-President, AAOS  
Thomas E. Arend, Jr., Esq., CAE, Chief Executive Officer, AAOS  
Nathan Glusenkamp, Chief Quality and Registries Officer, AAOS  
Graham Newson, Vice President, Office of Government Relations, AAOS