

Submitter: Bob Joondeph

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Behavioral Health and Health Care

Measure: HB2538

Rep. Nosse and Memembers of the Committee,

As a long-time disability rights advocate, I applaud any effort to fund the aids and services that people with disabilities need to receive equitable health care. However, the conceptual framework of this bill is confusing. Under the ADA and similar state law, a medical provider is obligated to also provide aids and services needed for their patients with disabilities. The cost of providing them is NOT the obligation of the patient. Health insurance policies, as I understand them, do not insure providers. They insure patients. HB2538, as written, provides mandatory coverage for providers to reimburse them for the cost of providing mandated aids and services. However, the underlying policies insure patients who cannot be made to bear such a cost. Requiring the patient's policy to cover a cost for which they cannot be charged makes no sense and could result in higher premiums which, I would argue, the patient cannot be made to pay, directly or indirectly. I suggest that the committee receive a thorough legal analysis from legislative counsel before moving forward with the bill.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit this testimony.

Bob Joondeph, JD