

Submitter: Mireya Rosas-Barajas
On Behalf Of: So Every Body can Move Oregon
Committee: Senate Committee On Health Care
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB699

Dear Senate Health Care Committee members,

As a public health educator, I know from my professional and personal experience that movement can be a transformative form of medicine for many folks. It's not difficult to find research that supports this claim, as physical activity is often linked to improved quality of life as seen through its positive physical and mental health outcomes. For this reason I wish to express my support for Senate Bill 699, which would mandate insurance coverage for orthotic and prosthetic care necessary for physical activity for folks living with limb loss or limb differences. Senate Bill 699 is currently pending in the Oregon Senate Health Care Committee and we urge you to move in favor of this bill.

Currently, prosthetic care for physical activity is considered "not medically necessary" and is often subject to denial by insurance companies, leaving patients without care and responsible for paying out of pocket for an activity specific device. These out of pocket costs can range from \$5,000 - \$50,000 for one device. These devices are specifically designed for different types of physical activities such as running, swimming, hiking or climbing. For those unable to access devices they can be put at risk of harm or injury when using improper devices, or alternatively, may develop sedentary lifestyles which can lead to long term health complications, isolation, or the development of more costly medical care. For this reason we believe that current practices discriminate against Oregonians with disabilities and limits their capacity to live full and healthy lives. Meanwhile, covering devices for physical activity has a minimal impact on insurance premiums while providing long term social and fiscal benefits by improving health access and equity for Oregonians with disabilities.

As a long time disability advocate I came to learn about the challenges faced by amputees shortly after completing my masters in public health. My background in insurance and research in health inequality lead me to volunteer with this movement and uplift the voices of those living with limb loss in Oregon. According to ongoing research in this field, following an amputation the expected life outcome for patients is significantly reduced, with some studies reporting mortality rates ranging from 39-80% after five years. Much of this is tied to comorbidities like diabetes and heart disease which has been proven to be reduced with higher levels of movement and physical activity. Therefore, based on my extensive research, it is my professional belief that covering activity based prosthesis or orthosis for those within the limb loss or limb difference community could dramatically improve long term health outcomes. Potentially also reducing mortality rates and/ or reducing the need for additional

costly healthcare services associated with the listed comorbidities. For this reason I am in support of Senate Bill 699 and its potential to expand access to recreational prosthesis or orthosis making it medically necessary for every body.

Thank you for your time and consideration and we hope you consider supporting Senate Bill 699.

Sincerely,

Mireya Rosas-Barajas (MPH)

Volunteer with So Every Body Can Move

Multnomah County Resident