

Date: 1/27/2025

On behalf of: So Every Body can Move

Position: Support/Favorable

Dear Senate Health Care Committee members,

I was born with congenital limb loss, which has resulted in me having a prosthetic leg for all of my life. I am fortunate, through multiple organizations (Shriners Children's Hospital and Challenged Athletes Foundation), to always have legs available to me as I've grown and needed them, and I am so grateful for this. For this reason, I am passionate about ensuring that ALL people who need orthotic and prosthetic services can obtain these services as well.

Given my experience, I want to express my support for Senate Bill 699, which would mandate insurance coverage for orthotic and prosthetic care necessary for physical activity for people with limb loss or limb differences. Senate Bill 699 is currently pending in the Oregon Senate Health Care Committee, and we urge you to support it.

Imagine being unable to participate in physical activities, explore Oregon's great outdoors, participate in gym class / play a team sport, or engage in everyday life the way you used to, simply because your insurance refuses to cover the prosthetic or orthotic devices necessary for those actions. This is the harsh reality for nearly 50,000 Oregonians with limb loss or limb difference. A single prosthetic or orthotic device doesn't restore full mobility or function; yet, insurance often deems additional devices as "not medically necessary," leaving individuals without the tools they need to live active, healthy lives. Families and children are forced to pay high out-of-pocket costs - ranging from \$ 5,000 to \$20,000 - rely on charity, or go without access. Those unable to access this medically necessary prosthetic and orthotic care can be put at risk of harm or injury when using improper devices or may develop sedentary lifestyles which can lead to long-term health complications, isolation, and the development of more costly medical care.

For this reason, I believe that current practices discriminate against Oregonians with disabilities and limit their capacity to live full and healthy lives. Meanwhile, covering devices for physical activity minimally impacts insurance premiums (a fiscal study estimated it would cost \$0.17 PMPM) while providing long-term social and fiscal benefits by improving health access and equity for Oregonians with disabilities.

This bill will significantly impact the limb loss and limb difference community by enabling many individuals to participate in gym class and engage in sports within schools and communities. It will provide opportunities for them to walk, hike, and enjoy the beautiful environment we live in, alleviating the financial burden many face since they cannot afford these devices or struggle just to obtain them. Additionally, it will have an emotional impact on many disabled Oregonians, who will gain more confidence, feel supported, and experience less isolation.

I believe that SB 699 is not just about prosthetics & orthotics —it's about ensuring people with disabilities can thrive, not just survive. It's about promoting physical and mental health, reducing long-term healthcare costs, and breaking down barriers to a full and active life. **I urge you to vote in favor of this bill so everyone can access the medical care they need to live healthy, fulfilling lives, regardless of their physical challenges,**

Sincerely,

Charlotte Nesse, age 13

SE Portland

District - 21 Senator Kathleen Taylor