

Submitter: Parker Farabee  
On Behalf Of: So Every Body Can Move  
Committee: Senate Committee On Health Care  
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB699  
Date: January 29th, 2025

On behalf of: So Every Body can Move

Position: Support/Favorable

Dear Senate Health Care Committee members,

As a physical therapist that has worked in nearly every rehabilitation setting, I have seen firsthand that movement can be a transformative form of medicine for many people, especially after a significant event such as an amputation. 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. Movement and exercise are also an excellent, typically accessible, means of preventing many chronic diseases such as obesity and diabetes. I use "typically" because for a specific population of people living with limb loss, most exercise is not currently easily accessible due to limitations in insurance coverage for specific prostheses and orthoses that are activity-specific. 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 people living with limb loss or limb differences and I 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 healthcare worker with an expertise in helping those with limb loss and other disabilities relearn mobility skills, I frequently encounter difficulties and push

back from insurance companies on the most basic mobility needs. Imagine wanting to go for a hike or a bike ride but being unable to because your insurance provider said it's not necessary for you to exercise. 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. It is my professional belief that covering activity based prostheses or orthoses for those living with limb loss or limb difference could dramatically improve long term health outcomes. 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 everyone.

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

Sincerely,

Dr. Parker Farabee PT, DPT

Portland resident and small business owner