

Submitter: Danielle Palagi
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Senate Committee On Health Care
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB699
Date: 01/23/2025
To: Oregon Senate Health Care Committee
Position: Support/Favorable

Dear Senate Health Care Committee members,

My name is Danielle Palagi, I am a below the knee amputee living in Portland, Oregon. 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.

I am currently a 34 year old special education teacher in Portland, Oregon. I lost my right leg below the knee at 26 years old when a semi-truck hit me while commuting home from work on my bicycle. Activity was important, not only did I exercise but I was running with students at work, I didn't have a car and cycling was my mode of transportation. I found out my insurance wouldn't pay for a leg to run or bike. I found a non-profit that granted me these for me my first years. I healed from something traumatic because I had access to proper medical devices and my mobility back. It was essential to my job and mental health. This bill would insure that everyone has access to the full range of mobility they deserve. Without this bill, I personally don't have a way to access a new running or biking leg once I grow out of mine. I'm currently pregnant and want to be able to run on the playground with my own child. Teach them how to run, bike and whatever activity they enjoy.

Currently, prosthetic and orthotic 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 or relying on charity for an activity specific device.

These out-of-pocket costs can range from \$5,000 - \$250,000 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, and the development of more costly medical care. For this reason I 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 an amputee I know that the appropriate prosthetic or orthotic device is critical for the highest quality of life. For this reason I am in support of Senate Bill 699 and its potential to expand access to recreational prosthesis and orthosis making it medically necessary for every body.

Sincerely,

Danielle Palagi
Portland, Oregon
District 3