

Senate Committee on Healthcare,

As a physical therapist assistant practicing in Oregon, passage of HB 3824 is vitally important because it recognizes the essential role that PT's play in Oregon's healthcare system. This bill also acknowledges the rigorous: training, education, and experience that PT's bring to serve our patients.

Personally, passage of HB 3824 would improve my ability to serve patients by decreasing the bottleneck of getting durable medical equipment and assistive devices into the hands of my patients sooner. Currently there is an average delay of 2-4 weeks to get assistive device orders signed by the doctor and sent off to insurance. There are several hours worth of time both from the PT and the doctors office to get these orders signed and sent off to insurance. This is not hyperbole. Most PT's now have a doctorate level of education, and assistive devices are more the scope of practice of DPT than of an MD. Please let us prevent unnecessary falls and patient mortality because of delays of assistive device ordering.

HB 3824A would also improve access to, particularly in rural communities, and timeliness of patient imaging by allowing PTs to order and interpret imaging. Over 10 other states have taken this action to help reduce patient cost burdens and improve patient outcomes by ensuring timeliness of care. The rural MD shortage is real. And as someone who serves rural patient populations, I can attest that a good portion of these people are homebound or bound within their communities for travel. Making long distance trips to suburban doctors is a burden that many choose to not take. Which further advances the morbidity and mortality rate of rural populations.

HB 3824A would allow physical therapists to certify a patient's disability placard or license plate application. This ability is vitally important especially given Oregon's shortage of providers and can help ensure that patients get adequate accommodations quickly and without unnecessary delay. This is a simple fix to alleviate some of the burden primary care practitioners are facing.

Thank you for your time and consideration in moving HB 3824A forward for the good of the health of Oregon.

Crystal Shutt Garcia, PTA