

**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
COMPILATION OF PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Submitted to the Committee on Public Health
For HB 2553

Compiled on: Monday, April 17, 2023 9:41 PM

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Hearing Date: April 17, 2023 8:00 AM

Karen Young
Self
Bulverde, TX

I am in favor of physical therapists to treat without a referral. Physical therapists are well trained in evaluation and treatment of musculoskeletal and neurological disorders. Direct access would expedite treatment, decrease costs and not eliminate but coordinate care with physicians when appropriate.

Adrianna Clavijo Melton
self, registered nurse, family nurse practitioner student
Seabrook, TX

Vote yes on HB 2553 to allow physical therapists to treat a patient without a referral. It is absurd to allow a PT to eval and treat a person for only 10-14 days and then require a provider referral to continue their therapy.

Heather Jackson, Dr.
Self Physical Therapist
Denton, TX

My name is Dr. Heather Jackson PT, DPT. I have been practicing Physical Therapy in the outpatient setting in Tennessee, Oklahoma, and now Texas for the last 7 years. I am in support of increasing Direct Access for Physical Therapists in Texas to improve patient's safe access to care in order to give them the opportunity to reduce the burden of escalating costs in pursuit of relief and resolution to their issues.

Increasing Direct Access for Physical Therapists will improve a patient's access to safe, informed, and evidence-based care. According to an article in Reporting Texas in 2021, "almost 70% of Texas' 254 counties are rural, but over 80% of the state's population live in metropolitan areas. Texas leads the nation in hospital closures too, as its rural communities have lost over half of their hospitals since 1960, and 27 have closed since 2010. Sixty-four counties have no hospital at all, and 25 lack a primary care physician."

Doctors of Physical Therapy are educated on differential diagnosis, imaging, pharmacology, and evidence-based practice to ensure if we are the first healthcare professional a patient sees, we can make a safe assessment to determine appropriate next steps. According to a literature review published in the Journal of Physical Therapy Science "Safety of the patient managed through DA was also found to be as secure as medical referred model of care. Moore et al. published a retrospective observational study on a military sample from the US army. Fifty thousand seven hundred and ninety-nine patients were assessed during a period of 40 months by physical therapists without any adverse events being recorded."

Increasing Direct Access for Physical Therapists in Texas is a safe and effective way to improve patient's access to evidence-based healthcare, reduce the burden of escalating cost, and provide a gatekeeper to help patient's get to the appropriate healthcare provider.

Thank you for your time,
Dr. Heather Jackson PT, DPT

References

Rural Texans Left in Dust Without Adequate Healthcare By: Brooke Nevins

Moore JH, McMillian DJ, Rosenthal MD, et al.: Risk determination for patients with direct access to physical therapy in military health care facilities. J Orthop Sports Phys Ther, 2005, 35: 674-678. [PubMed] [Google Scholar]

Kristen Hawthorne
Self
Austin, TX

Please oppose HB 2553. While physical therapy is needed in so many scenarios, before committing a large amount of healthcare dollars to this service, it should be determined that PT is necessary. Often patients want to find a noninvasive solution to an ache or pain but many of their symptoms are clues to other healthcare problems. Extended PT without proper evaluation can lead to missed or delayed diagnoses and also leads to increased healthcare costs if/when the service is not needed at that time.

Physical therapists are wonderful people but when one has a hammer to work with - they will use that hammer to try and fix any problem presented to them. If the PT doesn't have the tools to explore other options prior to a series of treatments and therapy sessions, one could see how human nature and financial conflict of interest might begin to cloud one's judgement and push forward with treatments despite a full workup of conditions not being explored.

Please vote for continued high quality medical care in Texas.

Please oppose HB 2553.

Anna Crisp, Dr.
Self Physical Therapist
Providence Village, TX

My name is Dr. Anna Crisp, PT, DPT. I am a Pelvic Floor Specialist and I treat all orthopedic and vestibular conditions in the state of Texas. I am a licensed and practicing physical therapist and I have been educated and trained on differential diagnosis, imaging, pharmacology, and evidence-based practice to be able to rule out any conditions that are out of my scope of practice. I am in support of increasing Direct Access for Physical Therapists in Texas to allow patients to receive the care they need in a timely manor while also reducing prolonged health care expenses.

Urinary incontinence is a common health care condition that can be treated by physical therapists trained in pelvic health. Incontinence pads and protection are costly expenses and if a person is not able to afford the proper sanitation products it can lead to an increased risk of urinary tract infections and further conditions affecting bowel and bladder health. Research shows that early access to physical therapy can be effective to decrease incontinence and cost for health care expenses.

86% of women experience pregnancy in America. Studies have found that programs including pelvic floor exercises and perineal massage may prevent episiotomies and tears in turn reducing postpartum pain and complications as well as complications during delivery. "79% reported experiencing pain after cesarean delivery and 48% of mothers with vaginal births reported experiencing a painful perineum persisting for at least 6 month; (Declercq et al., 2008). Many women have to wait 6 weeks to follow up with their physician postpartum. Early intervention and access to physical therapy can reduce the risk of pain, urinary incontinence and prolonged limitations following delivery. Direct access to Physical Therapy in the state of Texas can allow improved maternal mental and physical health and quality of life postpartum. Direct access to physical therapy can reduce overall medical costs for a plethora of conditions. Studies have shown a decreased usage of medical services in patients who receive physical therapy early after an episode of acute low back pain (Gellhorn et al., 2012). Increasing Direct Access for physical therapists in Texas is a safe and effective way to reduce healthcare costs and allow for early access to the appropriate medical care to improve patient's quality of life.

Thank you,
Dr. Anna Crisp PT, DPT

References:

Declercq, E., Cunningham, D. K., Johnson, C., Sakala, C. (2008). Mothers' reports of postpartum pain associated with vaginal and cesarean deliveries: Results of a national survey. *Birth*, 35(1), 16–24. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1523-536x.2007.00207.x>

Gellhorn, A. C., Chan, L., Martin, B., Friedly, J. (2012). Management patterns in acute low back pain. *Spine*, 37(9), 775–782. <https://doi.org/10.1097/brs.0b013e3181d79a09>

Yovanna Medina, Mrs

Myself
The woodlands, TX

Approve it please !!

We need PT to be able to treat patients without referrals just like Chiropractors do. Physical therapist have much more education and training having a doctors degree. Please allow patients to be able to be seen. By a PT without referral. Thank you

Anisha Malhotra, Dr.

Self, physician

Austin, TX

I am a physician and I strongly OPPOSE this bill. Physical therapists are not qualified to make medical diagnoses, regardless of what they might tell you. They are qualified to provide therapy once a diagnosis has been made. They are not trained in interpreting images to the degree a radiologist is.

Physical therapists do not carry medical malpractice. So what happens if the therapist incorrectly interprets an X-ray, CT scan, or MRI. Patients will have no recourse if they are misdiagnosed.