



TESTIMONY TO THE SENATE FINANCE COMMITTEE

SB0276: Maryland Medical Assistance Program and Health Insurance- Coverage for Orthoses and Prosthesis (So Every Body Can Move Act)

POSITION: Support

BY: Linda Kohn, President

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The League of Women Voters of Maryland supports Senate Bill 276: So Every Body Can Move Act. The League believes that every Maryland resident should have access to affordable, quality, equitable health care. The League is fully committed to equity, to ensure that everyone is treated with dignity and respect. By taking into account the various advantages and disadvantages that people face, the League works to ensure that all people, including people with disabilities, have an equal opportunity to succeed.

Passage of SB 276 would continue the progress made toward health equity for Marylanders with disabilities represented by passage of the 2024 "So Every Body Can Move Act." That legislation required certain Maryland health plans to provide coverage for prostheses. SB 276 would require those plans to provide coverage for orthoses as well.

Medical conditions associated with physical limitations, chronic pain, and the associated reduced quality of life can often be improved by the use of orthoses, i.e. braces and splints. These devices can enhance peoples' ability to participate in activities of daily living and recreation at home, school and work by helping them be more mobile and independent.

The World Health Organization's Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities noted that "Prostheses and orthoses enable people with physical impairments or functional limitations to live healthy, productive, independent, dignified lives....Without access [to them], people who need them are often excluded, isolated and locked into poverty, which increases the burden of morbidity and disability."¹

The Maryland Health Care Commission provided information on the cost of this increased coverage, estimating "The cost impact of requiring health insurance coverage for orthoses...will add about...\$1.08 per member per year to privately insured health care premiums."²

Access to needed orthoses is an essential component of health equity to help people with disabilities achieve an optimum quality of life and better health outcomes. The League and its 2,000 members urge a favorable report on Senate Bill 276.

¹<https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789241512480#:~:text=Overview,burden%20of%20morbidity%20and%20disability.>

² https://mhcc.maryland.gov/mhcc/pages/plr/plr/documents/2025/orthoses_cost_impact_rpt.pdf