



Senate Finance Committee

SB 276: Maryland Medical Assistance Program and Health Insurance Coverage for Orthoses (So Every Body Can Move Act)

February 4, 2026

Position: Support

The Maryland Down Syndrome Advocacy Coalition (MDAC) is a coalition of the five Down syndrome organizations in Maryland as well as individuals with Down syndrome and their family members who have come together to advocate for improved quality of life for all individuals with Down syndrome throughout the state of Maryland. MDAC works in coalition with other disability and advocacy organizations across the state and supports many legislative and policy efforts.

MDAC strongly supports SB 276, which would require Maryland Health Plans and the Maryland Medical Assistance Program to cover activity-specific orthoses, medically necessary devices that support alignment, improve function, and relieve symptoms of neuromuscular and musculoskeletal conditions, beginning January 1, 2027.

SB276 is aligned with one of MDAC's guiding principles: "People with Down syndrome need equitable, high-quality, and affordable physical and mental health care." Orthotic devices impact mobility, participation, and quality of life for people with Down syndrome. Individuals with Down syndrome commonly experience hypotonia (low muscle tone), ligament laxity, and foot deformities such as flat feet. These characteristics can impair gait, balance, endurance, and physical activity across the lifespan.

Research consistently supports the effectiveness of orthotic intervention for individuals with Down syndrome. A [study examining children with Down syndrome](#)¹ and excessively pronated feet found that foot orthoses significantly reduced heel eversion and improved gait stability, supporting better lower extremity alignment and walking mechanics. [Additional research](#)² shows that orthotic devices, including foot orthoses and supramalleolar orthoses, improve gait parameters, dynamic balance, and postural stability in children with Down syndrome, allowing for more efficient movement and reduced fatigue. This need does not end in childhood. [A study examining adults with Down syndrome](#)³ and flat feet demonstrated that the use of insoles improved knee stability and gait mechanics, reinforcing the need for continued orthotic support beyond childhood. And we all know the many benefits of maintaining an active lifestyle later in life.

¹ <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/11790903/%5D> - L Selby-Silverstein, et al., 2001

² <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC6110224/> - Kanai, et al. 2018

³ <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/32384597/> - Endo, et al. 2020

Improved mobility and postural control are also associated with positive developmental outcomes. [Use of orthotic devices among children with Down Syndrome has shown](#)⁴ to positively influence cognitive-adaptive and language-social growth.

Despite their clear medical value, orthotics are often not covered or are inadequately covered by insurance. As a result, many families are forced to pay significant out-of-pocket costs, which can range from \$300 to \$1300 a pair or more, or go without devices that are essential for safe mobility, joint protection, and long-term musculoskeletal health while also taking part in physical activities. SB276 would remove these financial barriers and ensure equitable access to medically necessary orthotic care for Marylanders who rely on these devices to move, work, and participate fully in their communities.

For these reasons, MDAC strongly supports SB276 and encourages a favorable report.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Submitted by,

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⁴ <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC6110224/> - Kanai, et al. 2018