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THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

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SB 276

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

Good afternoon Vice Chair Hayes and Members of the Finance Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to present SB 276, the expansion of the So Every BODY Can Move Act. It was only two sessions ago that Nathan blew us all away with his testimony about needing an activity-specific prosthesis for baseball. Fast forward to today: Nathan is now 5'9", has a mustache, and is getting a new baseball leg that will be covered by his insurance because of the bill we passed.

Nathan is not the only life that was changed by our passage of SB 614 during the 2024 session. Marylanders across the state have been able to receive prostheses to participate in water sports at the beach, play lacrosse, and do gymnastics—all activities they could not safely do before with their everyday devices.

However, we were unable to help everyone that year, as we needed to remove coverage for activity-specific custom orthoses for that bill to pass. Senate Bill 276 reintroduces coverage for custom orthoses for physical activity.

Orthoses, or orthotic devices, are external braces used to treat congenital, neuromuscular, or musculoskeletal disorders, as well as acquired conditions. This bill matches the coverage and language of the prosthetics bill that unanimously passed the Senate in 2024.

The disability community is at a significantly higher risk of physical inactivity compared to their able-bodied peers. Fifty percent of adults with disabilities get no aerobic physical activity, and the prevalence of obesity among children with mobility impairments is twice that of children without disabilities. This legislation will change lives and significantly decrease costs associated with the serious co-morbidities of physical inactivity—diabetes and cardiovascular disease, just to name two—with a small up-front cost.

Maryland can also learn from other states that have already passed this legislation. There are now seven states providing coverage for activity-specific custom orthoses. In states where these laws have been in effect for over one year, there has been little to no impact on insurance premiums. You will hear shortly from advocates who will provide additional insight into this data.

Together, we can help ensure that Marylanders have access to medically necessary custom orthoses for physical activity. I appreciate your consideration and respectfully ask for a favorable vote on SB 276.

