



Date: February 12, 2026

To: Chair Bagnall and Health Committee Members

Position: Favorable

Reference: House Bill 445-Maryland Medical Assistance Program and Health Insurance – Coverage for Orthoses (So Every Body Can Move Act)

Dear Chair Bagnall and Members of the Health Committee,

On behalf of LifeBridge Health, I appreciate the opportunity to submit testimony in support of House Bill 445, the *So Every Body Can Move Act*. LifeBridge Health's Rehabilitation Institute at Sinai Hospital provides a comprehensive continuum of rehabilitative care for patients recovering from illness, injury, surgery, and complex neurological conditions. Our services include acute rehabilitation within Sinai Hospital as well as care at our CARF-accredited inpatient rehabilitation hospital. Patients receive individualized, interdisciplinary treatment that includes physical, occupational, and speech therapy, along with physician-led care and specialized clinical support.

HB 445 builds upon Maryland's existing coverage framework by ensuring access to medically necessary, personalized orthoses. These devices—custom-designed, fabricated, molded, fitted, or modified to treat neuromuscular or musculoskeletal conditions—are not off-the-shelf products. For our patients, appropriate orthotic devices are truly life-changing and essential to functional recovery, mobility, and long-term health. By expanding coverage to include orthoses, Maryland can help individuals safely return to physical activity, maintain independence, and reduce the risk of secondary conditions associated with immobility, including hypertension, diabetes, and vascular disease. These preventable complications contribute to higher long-term costs for insurers and public programs than the modest coverage expansion anticipated under this bill.

Many patients served by LifeBridge Health live with chronic conditions for which regular, safe movement is medically necessary to sustain health and prevent decline. Orthotists and physicians work collaboratively to determine the most appropriate orthotic solutions to preserve function, prevent further impairment, and support overall well-being. Current coverage limitations often restrict patients to a single orthosis designed for basic ambulation, excluding medically appropriate devices needed for vocational, therapeutic, or higher-level physical activities. HB445 would allow eligible patients to access orthoses that support both their physical and psychological health, when clinically indicated.

Other states have recognized that restrictive coverage may conflict with federal antidiscrimination standards. For example, Colorado determined that limiting orthotic and prosthetic coverage undermined essential health benefits by preventing individuals with disabilities from engaging in physical and recreational activities necessary for health and independence. We were pleased to see a cost-neutral fiscal note for state impact. Covering medically necessary orthoses is **clinically appropriate, fiscally responsible, and ethically sound**. It improves patient outcomes, prevents avoidable costs, supports independence, and commercial carriers should align with modern standards of equitable, value-based healthcare. For these reasons, LifeBridge Health respectfully urges a **favorable report on HB445**. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely, Jennifer Witten, M.B.A.

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