



TO: Chair Beidle and Members, Senate Finance Committee

FROM: Andrew N. Pollak, MD, Chief Clinical Officer

DATE: February 14, 2024

RE: Testimony – SB614 *Maryland Medical Assistance Program and Health Insurance – Coverage for Orthoses and Protheses*

POSITION: FAVORABLE
February 14, 2024

Please accept these comments in **support** of **SB 614, *Maryland Medical Assistance Program and Health Insurance – Coverage for Orthoses and Protheses***. As an orthopedist for 30 years, it is difficult to overstate the importance of physical activity to the overall health and emotional wellbeing of my patients. While the benefits of regular exercise are widely known, time constraints and sometimes a lack of motivation make it challenging for many of us to get the hours we need. For some, however, those challenges are further complicated by the need for specialized prostheses or orthotics, without which the motivation and commitment of time to being physically active can be made meaningless.

Athletic activities such as running, swimming, and biking often require prostheses or orthoses that are engineered differently than those that support normal, daily activity. In addition, the more vigorous the exercise one is engaged in, the faster a device wears out and/or requires repair. Typically, insurance plans cover only one, basic orthosis or prosthesis. All too often, patients are unable to afford devices that are medically necessary to engage in competitive athletics or even general exercise in a safe and pain-free manner.

We know that individuals with limb loss are often more sedentary and we know the many, expensive health consequences of a sedentary lifestyle. Appropriate orthotic/prosthetic supports help to increase activity levels, which in turn improve both physical and psychological health.

Giving patients the ability to live full mobile lives not only impacts their physical health but also reduces pain and post-amputation depression. Without proper attention to full mobility, we often see lower levels of self-efficacy and motivation and greater degrees of anxiety, sadness, and self-consciousness among patients.

For these reasons, I support SB614, appreciate the opportunity to provide comments for the Committee's consideration and urge a **FAVORABLE** report.