



Date: March 28, 2024

To: Health and Government Operations Committee

Re: Support for Senate Bill 614 - Maryland Medical Assistance Program and Health Insurance - Coverage for Prostheses ("So Every Body Can Move Act"), Cross-Filed with HB 865

Position: Favorable with Senate Finance Committee Amendments

Dear Chair Pena Melnyk and Members of the HGO Committee,

On behalf of the organizations spearheading the "So Every Body Can Move" initiative, we extend our heartfelt support for Senate Bill 614, cross-filed with HB 865. This landmark bill promises a brighter future for Maryland's children and adults experiencing limb loss, like young Nathan who just wants to play baseball with his friends, whom you've had the pleasure of meeting. It advocates for their unalienable right to movement, ensuring access to prostheses designed for physical activity, thereby transforming lives across Maryland for people living with a disability.

Why This Bill Matters: Last month's testimonies during HB 865's hearing brought to light the vital need for activity-specific prosthetic devices deemed medically necessary by healthcare providers. The stories shared by patients and healthcare providers from your constituencies underscored a universal truth - the freedom to move is not a luxury; it's a fundamental human right.

Currently, countless Marylanders face the grim reality of life with limb loss or differences, coupled with mobility impairments, largely due to the inaccessibility of orthotic and prosthetic (O&P) care. Without appropriate health coverage, adults, children, and families are forced to incur prohibitive out-of-pocket costs, risk harm or injury using an inappropriate device, or live without the benefits of appropriate prosthetic care, leading to sedentary lifestyles with costly secondary health complications and costs. As a result, countless Marylanders are unable to engage fully in society, facing not only physical but also financial burdens.

The Essential Change: The Affordable Care Act includes medically necessary O&P care as part of its "essential health benefits." However, Maryland's health plans have interpreted this provision narrowly, covering only basic mobility needs and overlooking the vast spectrum of human activity. Our advocacy underscores the necessity for physical activity prostheses to fully restore individuals' abilities, enabling participation in Activities of Daily Living (ADLs), and be active citizens in society like their non-disabled peers.

The Path Forward: We applaud the collaborative efforts between Maryland's "So Every Body Can Move" advocates, commercial carriers, Medicaid, and other stakeholders, culminating in consensus amendments that refine this legislation. These amendments smartly address fiscal concerns while paving the way for a future where orthotic and prosthetic care becomes fully accessible and equitable.

Specific Amendments Include:

- Address carrier concerns, placing a cap on coverage for MCOs in order to address the fiscal note
- Strike cosmesis from the bill language
- Remove orthotics coverage language from the bill and ask for a study to be completed by

MHCC and Medicaid, consulting with MIA, to determine the fiscal impact for orthotic parity and activity-specific orthotics coverage.

Your Vote Matters: By supporting the amended SB 614 and aligning HB 865 accordingly, you champion the cause of enabling every Marylander with a disability to embracing the full benefits of physical activity, just like their peers. This is more than a legislative victory; it's a beacon of hope for families and individuals across our state, affirming that Maryland values every citizen's right to move, to engage, and to thrive.

Please vote favorably on the amended SB 614 and conforming HB 865 to SB 614!

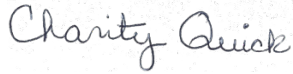
Sincerely



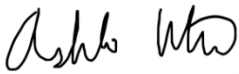
Eve Lee, MBA, CAE
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So Every BODY Can Move is a grassroots policy and advocacy initiative working to create equitable and life-changing access to O&P care necessary for physical activity for individuals with disabilities through state-by-state legislative change.

