



Date: February 13, 2024

To: Chair Pena-Melnyk and Vice Chair Cullison of the Health and Government Operations Committee
Reference: House Bill 865, Maryland Medical Assistance Program and Health Insurance - Coverage for Orthoses and Prostheses

Position: FAVORABLE

Dear Chair, Pena-Melnyk and Committee Members:

On behalf of LifeBridge Health, I appreciate the opportunity to offer our support and testimony for House Bill 865. LifeBridge Health is a regional health system comprising Sinai Hospital of Baltimore, an independent academic medical center; Levindale Hebrew Geriatric Center and Hospital in Baltimore; Northwest Hospital, a community hospital in Baltimore County; Carroll Hospital, a sole community hospital in Carroll County; Grace Medical Center (formerly Bon Secours Hospital), a freestanding medical facility in West Baltimore; and Center for Hope a center of excellence focused on provided hope and services for trauma survivors in Baltimore City.

In particular, I am here on behalf of the Sinai Rehabilitation Center, founded in 1965, the first full department of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation in Maryland outside a government facility, and the patients we care for in our comprehensive limb loss rehabilitation program. Our program prioritizes the total care of people with limb loss and limb difference. We do not focus only on the anatomic loss and the prosthesis to accommodate for that loss. This perspective incorporates utilizing all treatment interventions that will maintain the optimal health of our patients. The goals we strive to accomplish include promoting cardiovascular health and supporting the greatest level of prosthetic use that the patient wishes to achieve and that is medically appropriate. Achieving these goals is a critical component of our most important outcome metric, preventing another amputation. The statistics are sobering- within 3 years of amputation, there is a 50% chance of needing a second amputation.

We strongly support House Bill 865 for its specific reference to provision of orthoses and prosthetics for basic activities of daily living, essential job-related activities, and also other physical activities that optimize whole-body health. This last indication is a medically necessary component of overall health care, especially for people with limb loss. The inability to participate in adequate therapeutic exercise increases the risk of developing medical conditions such as diabetes, hypertension, and cardiac and peripheral vascular disease. Many of our patients already suffer from these conditions, and proper exercise is one of the most important components of treatment for them. Unchecked, these are the risk factors that lead to amputation.

Prosthetists and physicians who care for people with limb loss work closely together to identify the most appropriate prosthetic devices and components that will best maintain the health of our patients and prevent further impairment.

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Currently, coverage is limited to providing one prosthesis or orthosis that provides for a basic level of functional use such as community ambulation, but not for higher level vocational and athletic activities. In addition to the device used for daily activities, those who are medically and functionally appropriate to engage in these activities require a proper prosthesis specific to allow safe and effective participation, HB 865 would provide coverage for properly selected patients to gain the medical and psychological benefits of this activity level.

For all the above stated reasons, we request a favorable report for House Bill 865.

For more information, please contact:

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