

Dear Members of the Maryland State Senate Finance Committee,

My name is Jonas Ljung and I am an Orthotist treating a variety of patients (a high percentage receiving Maryland Medicaid benefits) at Hanger Clinic. I am writing to express my strong support for the inclusion of activity-specific orthoses as a covered benefit under insurance plans in Maryland. As healthcare provider specializing in pediatrics, I have witnessed firsthand the profound impact that these specialized devices can have on both the physical and psychological health and quality of life of my patients.

Activity-specific orthoses are custom-made devices designed to support, align, prevent, or correct deformities or to improve the function of movable parts of the body for highly specialized tasks such as sports. Unlike standard orthotic devices designed for everyday wear and use (eg walking), these orthoses are designed in different alignments or functions unique to the needs of individuals engaged in sports (eg running, kicking a ball, holding a kayak paddle). As a clinician, I have designed and fit orthotic devices to facilitate a patient, with a congenital limb difference, kayaking with her family and not having to ride as a passive passenger when her family is out on the river, to help a child with cerebral palsy pedal a bike with both legs instead of just with one side and another child with cerebral palsy who complained they could not kick a soccer ball as well as their peers because their orthoses designed for walking did not allow them to run to strike the ball with the proper part of their foot.

One of the most compelling reasons to support insurance coverage for activity-specific orthoses is their potential to significantly enhance the quality of life and allow children to participate with their able bodied peers and family members. Furthermore, by

addressing biomechanical issues we can potentially prevent injuries, and encourage a more active lifestyle contributing to long-term health benefits and cost savings for the healthcare system.

I urge you to consider the critical role activity-specific orthoses play in improving patient health outcomes and quality of life. Including these devices as a covered benefit under insurance plans will ensure broader access for those in need, ultimately promoting a healthier and more productive population.

Thank you in advance for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Jonas Ljung CPO, MSPO  
Clinic Manager  
Hanger Clinic