

To: Chair Bagnall, Vice Chair Cullison, and Members of the House Health Committee

Date: 02/10/2026

Re: HB 445 — Maryland Medical Assistance Program and Health Insurance — Coverage for Orthoses and Prostheses (So Every BODY Can Move Act)

Position: **Support / Favorable**

Dear Chair Bagnall, Vice Chair Cullison, and Committee Members:

My name is Sheryl Sachs, and I am a Certified Prosthetist-Orthotist (MSPO, CPO) in Maryland. I respectfully submit this testimony **in strong support of House Bill 445 — the So Every BODY Can Move Act.**

HB 445 modernizes and strengthens Maryland's health coverage mandates for orthoses and prostheses, ensuring equitable access to medically necessary devices that support mobility, daily living, participation in employment, and physical activity. This bill builds on the historic groundwork laid by Maryland's prior So Every BODY Can Move legislation from the 2024 legislative session, which went into effect January 2025, and continues Maryland's leadership in addressing long-standing coverage gaps for people with mobility impairments.

This legislative effort in Maryland is part of a broader national movement — So Every BODY Can Move — that recognizes movement is medicine and seeks to ensure insurance coverage for activity-specific orthotic and prosthetic devices that are medically necessary to support leading healthy and active lives. Last year, **four states successfully enacted legislation clarifying existing mandates to ensure coverage for orthotic and prosthetic devices for physical activity: New Jersey, Washington, Oregon, and Georgia.** These laws require carriers to cover custom orthotic and prosthetic devices, including those required for physical activity and wellness, signaling widespread recognition of the importance of such coverage.

In addition to these enacted laws, **many states have introduced or are actively advancing similar bills this session,** reflecting strong bipartisan momentum across the country. During the 2026 legislative session, states including **Ohio, New Hampshire, Virginia, New Mexico, Missouri, Arizona, Massachusetts, Mississippi, Vermont, Indiana, Oklahoma, Florida, Oregon, Tennessee, Georgia, Kentucky, Hawaii, Washington, Alaska, and Kansas** have all introduced legislation to require or expand coverage for orthotic and prosthetic devices that align with the core principles of So Every BODY Can Move. This demonstrates the growing national consensus that insurance

should cover devices needed not just for daily living, but for overall health and physical activity.

HB 445 makes critical improvements to existing law by:

1. **Ensuring Comprehensive Coverage** — It clarifies that **orthoses**— including those needed for physical activities, employment, and full participation in life — must be covered by insurers and Medicaid when medically necessary. This removes arbitrary limitations that have previously left individuals without access to these custom orthoses essential for health and function, and matches the coverage enacted for prostheses during the 2024 legislative session.
2. **Closing Remaining Gaps** — By explicitly covering both **orthotic and prosthetic devices** for daily living, job-related activities, and physical activities such as walking, running, swimming, strength training, and other movements that sustain health, this bill aligns coverage with real human needs. Many of our patients requires both prostheses and custom orthoses for daily use.
3. **Promoting Preventive Health** — Movement is medicine: physical activity is strongly correlated with improved cardiovascular health, mental health, employment outcomes, and reduced secondary complications. When people have access to devices that enable movement, we see better long-term health outcomes and potentially reduced health care costs from complications associated with inactivity.
4. **Aligning with National Trends** — Maryland’s leadership will resonate with efforts nationwide to modernize orthotic and prosthetic coverage. As other states adopt similar reforms, the evidence base for improved outcomes and the feasibility of such coverage grows stronger.

For many Marylanders, HB 445 means the difference between being limited to a single device that only partially meets their needs and having **full access to the medically necessary custom orthoses** that allow them to function safely, participate in work and community life, and pursue different physical activities such as running, weight-training, and hiking. Without adequate coverage, individuals are often forced to shoulder enormous out-of-pocket costs or forgo devices entirely — undermining their health, independence, and quality of life. Maryland’s previous So Every BODY Can Move law already made important progress; HB 445 takes the next step by ensuring that coverage truly reflects the functional and preventive benefits of modern orthotic and prosthetic care.

We have seen through implementation of this legislation in other states that the fiscal impact is significantly lower than initially believed. Across the three states that have enacted custom orthoses coverage for **at least one year—New Mexico, Minnesota, and Illinois**—there has only been an **increased utilization of 5%**. In New Mexico, rate reviews completed by all commercial insurances saw a **0.0% increase in premiums** while still providing medically necessary activity-specific custom orthoses and prostheses. **While this legislation is life-changing for those with lived experience, that number of**

individuals is small compared to the masses that it results in negligible impacts on insurance premiums.

Maryland has the opportunity to be a national leader in equitable health coverage that supports meaningful participation, health, and well-being for individuals with mobility challenges. HB 445 embodies the principles of dignity, fairness, and evidence-based care that should guide our health system.

For these reasons, I **strongly urge a favorable report on HB 445.**

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Sheryl

Sheryl Sachs, MSPO, CPO
Certified Prosthetist Orthotist