

Date: 02/10/2026

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

Reference: SB0276- Maryland Medical Assistance Program and Health Insurance - Coverage for Orthoses and Prosthesis (So Every Body Can Move Act)

Position: **Support/Favorable**

Dear Chair Bagnall, and Committee Members:

We respectfully urge your support of House Bill 445, a bill that directly impacts the health and independence of patients like us who rely on orthotic care. These custom orthoses allow us to move, work, and care for our families, and access to appropriate, activity-specific devices is essential for us to maintain our health and quality of life.

While we may not identify as disabled, the absence of full function in one or more of our limbs creates real and significant limitations. Without the proper orthotic devices, many of us are unable to safely participate in physical activities beyond basic walking. This lack of access restricts our ability to stay active, prevent further health complications, and fully engage in our communities.

House Bill 445 would help remove these barriers by ensuring that patients like us have access to the orthotic devices we need to remain healthy, active, and independent. Below, you will find testimony from patients and families who live these challenges every day and respectfully ask for your support of HB 445.

- Soccer or running would be a great help for my husband, critical for his mental and physical wellbeing.
- Had a spinal cord injury and when I was recovering as many functions as possible, I used necessary orthotics which ultimately allowed me to regain my abilities to walk unassisted which is so critical for someone my age. It had unlocked my life again without it I don't know where I'd be. I'm testifying for this bill because during my recovery (windows is only 2 years) I had to wait 3 months before retrieving my new AFO which had the ability to push off unlike my first one which was critical for return of function from foot drop I imagine my recovery would've gone even better had I received it faster.

- Being able to participate in activities beyond just walking provides gratification and fulfillment in life. By allowing myself and others the ability to seek out and participate in activities beyond just propulsion from point A to point B makes us feel complete as humans and feeds our mental health.

We need this legislation to grant us access to activity-specific orthoses so that we can engage in physical activities that allow for us to maintain our health. We share our stories above to urge you to support HB 445.

Thank you for your consideration and your support,

Freweini Y Kiflemarian

Dr. Marne Harker DNP, MSN-Ed, RN, CNEcl

Matthew William Mitchell