

FTR

Lois Carlson, OTR/L, CHT
489 Old Slocum Rd.
Hebron, CT 06248

Date: 3-6-14

Insurance and Real Estate Committee
Legislative Office Building
300 Capitol Avenue
Hartford, CT 06106

Regarding: Raised Bill No. 5249
AN ACT CONCERNING COPAYMENTS FOR OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY SERVICES.

Dear Co-Chairs, Ranking Members, and Members of the Insurance and Real Estate Committee:

I am an occupational therapist, specializing in Hand Therapy (Certified Hand Therapist) at The Hand Center in Glastonbury, CT. I am requesting that you pass Raised Bill No. 5249, which would be an extension of last year's Public Act No. 13-307 (House Bill 6546) that similarly limited the co-payments for physical therapy services.

Our facility has both occupational and physical therapists. Both of these groups of professionals have also been certified in the specialty of Hand Therapy. A Certified Hand Therapist (CHT) is an occupational therapist or physical therapist who has a minimum of five years of clinical experience, including 4,000 hours or more in direct practice in hand therapy. In addition, the Certified Hand Therapist has successfully passed a comprehensive test of advanced clinical skills and theory in upper quarter rehabilitation. Because of changes in the profession, every CHT is required to demonstrate continued professional development and competency by recertifying every five years. Nationally, 86% of hand therapists are occupational therapists, and 14% are physical therapists. **In our clinic, 5 of our therapists are occupational therapists, and only 1 is a physical therapist. It is not in the best interest of our patients to have co-pays limited for only one of our six highly qualified therapists.**

The types of patients treated, during this very long winter, for example, include forearm and wrist fractures (from falls on the ice) and snowblower injuries. In general, we treat patients with upper extremity physical dysfunction secondary to injury or disease, including crush injuries, fractures, ligamentous and/or joint instability or destruction, nerve and tendon injuries, Dupuytren's disease, arthritis, amputations and replantations.

I thank you for your attention to this matter, and ask your support of this legislation. Please feel free to contact me if you have any additional questions.

Sincerely,

Lois Carlson, OTR/L, CHT
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