

To whom this letter may concern,

I hope this letter finds you well. I am writing to express my strong support for the bill currently under consideration in the Oregon legislature that would allow for 16 visits of physical therapy (PT) without the need for prior authorization. As a [your profession] who has witnessed firsthand the benefits of early intervention in physical therapy, I urge you to consider the positive impact this bill would have on patient outcomes, particularly in cases involving stroke recovery.

As you may know, early access to physical therapy is critical for patients recovering from a cerebrovascular accident (CVA), or stroke. In these cases, the brain's ability to recover and reorganize is greatest in the first few weeks and months after the event. This is when the most significant progress can be made, especially in regaining mobility, strength, and function. Limiting the number of PT sessions or delaying access due to prior authorization requirements can significantly hinder recovery, leaving patients with long-term impairments that could have been minimized with more timely intervention.

In my experience, the process of obtaining prior authorization for PT sessions can often delay care for patients who need it urgently. I have worked with several individuals post-stroke who would have benefited from immediate physical therapy, but due to the time-consuming prior authorization process, they experienced delays in starting their treatment. These delays can lead to poorer outcomes and increased long-term healthcare costs, as patients are more likely to require extensive rehabilitation and medical intervention later on, rather than addressing issues early when they are more easily treatable.

Additionally, these delays in care often create unnecessary anxiety and frustration for patients, who are eager to begin their recovery journey. For some, the waiting period can feel like an insurmountable obstacle, leading to disengagement or the perception that their recovery is less achievable. The frustration felt by patients navigating the bureaucracy of prior authorization adds to the emotional and psychological toll of an already difficult recovery process.

Furthermore, limiting PT visits without prior authorization also contributes to the rising cost of healthcare. Without the ability to address physical therapy needs early and effectively, patients are more likely to require more expensive treatments down the road, such as surgery, extended hospital stays, or long-term care. By allowing for 16 PT visits before requiring prior authorization, the state can help reduce overall healthcare costs while ensuring that patients have access to the necessary services when they need them most.

I strongly believe that this bill will not only improve the quality of care for patients but also ensure that we, as a state, are investing in the long-term health and well-being of Oregonians. I respectfully urge you to support this bill and advocate for a system that values early intervention, removes unnecessary barriers to care, and ultimately improves patient outcomes.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I would be happy to provide any additional information or speak further on this issue if it would be helpful.

Sincerely,
Michelle Berman, PT, DPT