



ORTHOPAEDICS OPPOSES UNLIMITED TREATMENTS BY PHYSICAL THERAPISTS BEFORE DIAGNOSIS

S3361 (Senator Timothy Kennedy) / A2300 (Assemblymember Sarah Clark)

Removes limits on the duration of treatment by a licensed physical therapist when a patient does not have a referral.

The New York State Society of Orthopaedic Surgeons believes access to a professional team of musculoskeletal providers, working together, will provide high-quality efficient care. Working as a team facilitates a shared decision process that provides the greatest chance of achieving the "right" amount and type of care for each individual patient.

In 2006, the Physical Therapy Practice Act was amended to permit physical therapists (with three years of full-time experience) to directly treat patients without an initial referral up to 30 days. This negotiation recognized the importance of providing **short-term** therapy as patients recover after injury, and acknowledged that if symptoms do not improve, there could be an underlying condition that requires a physician's diagnosis.

When a patient goes to a physical therapist, the goal is to receive treatment, not to receive a diagnosis since a physical therapist is not authorized under law to diagnose. When a patient sees a medical doctor, the goal is to get a diagnosis, followed by a decision about the best treatment, drawing from the full spectrum of medical knowledge. This treatment may include physical therapy.

If enacted, this legislation will fragment the coordinated team approach, increase the time for treatment and definitive diagnosis which may result in increased costs and negatively impact patient safety. Physical therapy is very important, and it should be done in collaboration with a physician.

NYSSOS maintains its position that 10 physical therapy visits or 30 days for evaluation does not inhibit patient access and is an adequate time for treatment response. We oppose removing the limits on duration.

AVOID THESE COMMON MISCONCEPTIONS

Myth: *Patient Safety is Not Impacted*

Truth: Unlimited Treatment Before Diagnosis by a Physician IS DANGEROUS For Patient Safety.

Myth: *Access Improved By this Legislation*

Truth: Comprehensive Rural Medical Services Currently Meeting Patients' Needs.

Myth: *This Will Reduce Costs*

Truth: Patients Will Pay Out-of-Pocket Because Insurance Will Not Pay Without a Medical Diagnosis. May Force Higher Costs on Workers Compensation and State Group Insurance.

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