

DIRECT ACCESS TO THE PHYSICAL THERAPIST

A Practice Act Revision (H.F.1995/S.F.3338)

WHAT WOULD THIS BILL DO?

1. Removes the arbitrary access barriers to a physical therapist including a 90 day barrier after which a patient must pause their care, visit a physician, and secure a referral to continue their PT even if they're getting better. The bill also removes the practice limitations placed on newly licensed PTs
2. Clarifies the scope of PT practice to reflect the current education, training, and examination of Doctors of Physical Therapy
3. Updates the language regarding the relationship between the physical therapist and the physical therapist assistant (PTA)
4. Provides for term protection, strengthens title protection, and allows the MN Board of PT to assess fines for violations

In their entirety, these changes to law are proposed as a reform effort to reduce unnecessary health care costs that often fall on the shoulders of patients.

WHAT THIS BILL WOULD NOT DO:

- This bill does not expand the scope of practice of the physical therapist.



WHY IS THIS GOOD POLICY?

Because it saves money – For over 40 years in MN, consumers have been self-referring to physical therapists but they continue to face arbitrary barriers along the way. These barriers result in the costs of unnecessary physician visits, often result in delayed care and in some cases lead to more expensive interventions.

This bill conforms to the policy of the U.S. military, which seeks to maintain personnel at the highest level of readiness while avoiding unnecessary delays and costs.

A growing number of insurance plans no longer require referrals to access a physical therapist, recognizing the gatekeeper model for physical therapy unnecessarily costs them money. Yet they often have to cover visits that could have been avoided completely.

Because it's safe - Liability insurers do not risk adjust premiums in the states that allow unrestricted access to physical therapists. There is no credible evidence supporting the need to secure a referral at any random point in care provided by physical therapists.

In 40 years, The MN Board of Physical Therapy has not taken disciplinary action against any physical therapist due to harm to a patient as a result of access without referral.

REMOVE ACCESS BARRIERS TO REDUCE THE COST OF:

- Unnecessary physician visits
- Delayed care
- More expensive interventions

If you have questions about this bill, contact info@mnapta.org