

SCR 23

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James Hewson, PT

SCR 23sd1, Requesting the Auditor to Assess the Social and Financial Effects of Requiring Health Insurers to Provide Coverage for Physical Therapy for Chronic Pain That Is Prescribed by A Board Certified Surgeon

Sen WAM Hearing, Wednesday, April 13, 2011

Room 211 – 9:30 am



Position: Comments

Chair Ige, and Members of the Sen WAM Committee:

I am James Hewson, P.T., member of HAPTA's Legislative Committee and small business owner of a private practice clinic. HAPTA represents 250 physical therapists and physical therapist assistants employed in hospitals, nursing homes, the Armed Forces, the Department of Education and Department of Health (DOH) systems, and private clinics throughout our community. Physical therapists work with everyone, from infants to the elderly, to restore and improve function and quality of life. We are part of the spectrum of care for Hawaii, and provide rehabilitative services for infants and children, youth, adults and the elderly. Rehabilitative services are a vital part of restoring optimum function from neuromusculoskeletal injuries and impairments.

We appreciate efforts to provide consumers with greater access to healthcare. However, we wish to clarify that this is not a HAPTA-driven measure, and wish to comment on it since it addresses physical therapy. Physical therapists are part of the team of clinicians that provide care to patients with severe chronic pain or acute pain originating from cancer or noncancerous conditions.

We note that this measure directs the Legislative Auditor to look at the social and financial effects of mandated coverage for physical therapy for chronic pain prescribed by a board-certified surgeon.

Such referrals for physical therapy can be from any board-certified physician and is not limited to board-certified surgeons. We ask that the term, board-certified surgeon, be replaced with "any board-certified physician".

I can be reached at 526-0507 if there are any questions. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on this measure.