

# SCR 23

**Measure Title:** 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.

**Report Title:** Mandatory Physical Therapy Coverage; Prescription by Board-Certified Surgeon

**Description:**

**Companion:**

**Package:** None

**Current Referral:** CPN, WAM



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March 26, 2011

Committee on Commerce and Consumer Protection  
Senator Rosalyn Baker, Chair  
Senator Brian Taniguchi, Vice Chair

**Hearing:**

March 29, 2011, 9:00 a.m.

Hawaii State Capitol, Conference Rm. 229

**RE: SCR 23 – 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.**

**Testimony in Strong Support**

Chair Baker, and members of the Committee on Commerce and Consumer Protection:

On behalf of the American Cancer Society Hawaii Pacific Inc., we are pleased to submit this testimony in strong support of SCR 23, which request an auditor's impact study regarding health insurance for physical therapy for chronic pain.

Physical therapy is an essential component in complementary cancer treatment. It often is prescribe as part of the rehabilitation process. A physical therapist usually creates a physical fitness regimen consisting of cardiovascular, flexibility and strength training. Physical therapy also includes massage therapy, which recent studies show can decrease stress, anxiety, depression, and pain.

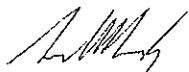
We would point out that many people with cancer experience pain, anxiety, and mood disturbance. Conventional treatments do not always satisfactorily relieve these symptoms, and some patients may not be able to tolerate their side effects. Complementary therapies such as physical therapy, massage, acupuncture, mind-body techniques, and other methods can help relieve symptoms and improve a patient's physical and mental well-being.

Research has shown that people with cancer usually get less active as symptoms or treatments make them feel lousy. Plus, certain therapies can weaken muscles, bones, and even the heart. New guidelines issued by the American College of Sports Medicine, last June, advised cancer survivors to aim for the same amount of exercise as recommended for the average person: about 2 1/2 hours a week. Physical therapy strengthens muscles, ligaments, tendons, and joints thus enabling cancer patients to participate in exercise programs.

We strongly urge the committee to pass SCR 23, which is a necessary first step in implementing health insurance coverage for this vital service which will greatly enhanced the recovery of 6,700 patients who will diagnosed with cancer this year.

Thank you for the opportunity to offer testimony here today.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'G. Massengale', written in a cursive style.

George S. Massengale, JD  
Director of Government Relations



**Written Testimony Only:**

**James Hewson, PT**

**SCR 23, 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 CPN Hearing, Tuesday, March 29, 2011**

**Room 229 – 9:00 am**

**Position: Comments**

Chair Baker, and Members of the Sen CPN 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.