



DISABILITY AND COMMUNICATION ACCESS BOARD

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April 13, 2017

TESTIMONY TO THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH

Senate Concurrent Resolution 105, SD1– Requesting the Auditor to Assess the Social and Financial Effects of Requiring Health Insurers, Mutual Benefit Societies, and Health Maintenance Organizations to Provide Coverage for Medically Necessary Cognitive Rehabilitation Therapy for Survivors of Traumatic Brain Injury

The Disability and Communication Access Board (DCAB) is a statewide Governor-appointed Board with a majority of its members being persons with disabilities or family members. The Board's mission is to advocate and promote full inclusion, independence, equal access, and quality of life for persons with disabilities in society. This testimony represents a position voted upon by the Legislative Committee of the Board.

DCAB supports Senate Concurrent Resolution 105, SD1 Requesting the Auditor to Assess the Social and Financial Effects of Requiring Health Insurers, Mutual Benefit Societies, and Health Maintenance Organizations to Provide Coverage for Medically Necessary Cognitive Rehabilitation Therapy for Survivors of Traumatic Brain Injury. We have worked with the Brain Injury Association of Hawaii by providing community educational and awareness activities over the past two decades.

Through our interactions with the sponsors and survivors of traumatic brain injury (TBI), we have first-hand experience with the devastating impact TBI has on individuals. We have also seen that over the years, if a survivor of TBI has access to cognitive rehabilitation services that recovery does occur allowing the individual to lead a productive life. It is different for each individual depending on the severity of the injury, age, support network, and access to and types of services the person has that makes a difference in the rate and level of recovery.

Hopefully the various studies that have been published, since the 2004 Auditor's Report Number 04-11, will provide the information necessary to allow survivors of TBI to obtain more insurance coverage for medically necessary cognitive rehabilitation therapy.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Respectfully submitted,

BARBARA FISCHLOWITZ-LEONG
Chairperson
Legislative Committee

FRANCINE WAI
Executive Director

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
Sent: Tuesday, April 11, 2017 1:08 PM
To: HLTtestimony
Cc: louis@hawaiidisabilityrights.org
Subject: Submitted testimony for SCR105 on Apr 13, 2017 10:30AM

SCR105

Submitted on: 4/11/2017

Testimony for HLT on Apr 13, 2017 10:30AM in Conference Room 329

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Louis Erteschik	Hawaii Disability Rights Center	Support	Yes

Comments: We have been involved with this issue for more than a decade. During that time the prevalence of brain injuries has increased exponentially. Everyone has heard the expression that traumatic brain injury is the signature wound of the wars around the world. Our understanding is that while receiving immediate acute hospital care has not been a particular issue, what has been lacking has been coverage for rehabilitation care and further treatment such as cognitive therapy. We are aware of the 2004 Report from the Legislative Auditor which expressed that there was not a clear definition of cognitive rehabilitation. It also left room to receive new studies as they unfolded. The language in SCR 105 , SD1 provides a comprehensive definition and also references specific studies which it asks the Auditor to review. For those reasons, it seems like a very good next step would be to request the Auditor to update the 2004 report and so we urge the Committee to advance this measure. We also would like to encourage further stakeholder discussion in the hope that the parties can either achieve consensus or at least come to a baseline understanding of specifically what gaps currently exist in the service delivery and coverage system so that the legislature next session can then assess the rationale for any gaps in coverage and make a comprehensive policy decision as to what further steps are needed.

Please note that testimony submitted less than 24 hours prior to the hearing, improperly identified, or directed to the incorrect office, may not be posted online or distributed to the committee prior to the convening of the public hearing.

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HLT - HUS
04/13/2017
Room 329 - 10:30 AM

Testimony in **SUPPORT** of SCR 105, SDI

I am a psychologist and member of the Board of Directors for the Hawaii Disability Rights Center. I am testifying as an individual who works with many patients recovering from neurotrauma who would significantly benefit from cognitive rehabilitation, but most are unable to afford it because Hawaii does not mandate coverage for this well-known and respected therapy.

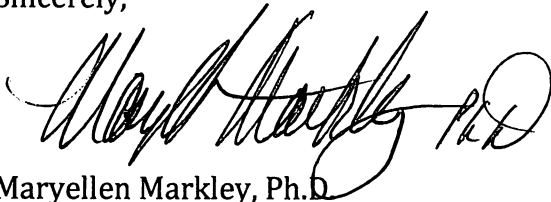
EVERY STATE EXCEPT HAWAII COVERS IT:

Briefly, 49 other states and the District of Columbia now mandate private insurance coverage of cognitive rehabilitation therapy, as does Medicare and Medicaid, because it has been shown again and again to be the most effective therapy to achieve best recovery in patients with neurotrauma, especially when started within the first year after the initial injury.

I can tell you from my own professional experience as well as documentation from numerous well-respected studies, that the lifetime benefits of cognitive rehabilitative therapy far, far, far outweigh the initial cost for this critical treatment.

The time has come to join the rest of the country and provide the best possible opportunity for our neurotrauma patients to recover.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Maryellen Markley Ph.D.", written in a cursive style.

Maryellen Markley, Ph.D.

kobayashi1- Oshiro

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
Sent: Wednesday, April 12, 2017 12:28 PM
To: HLTtestimony
Cc: tika_bean@hotmail.com
Subject: *Submitted testimony for SCR105 on Apr 13, 2017 10:30AM*

SCR105

Submitted on: 4/12/2017

Testimony for HLT on Apr 13, 2017 10:30AM in Conference Room 329

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Erica Scott	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

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Categories: Red Category

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