

House Committee on Health & Human Services
State of Rhode Island General Assembly

March 27th, 2025

Testimony in opposition to *HB-5082*

Dear Members of the House Committee on Health & Human Services,

I am a licensed speech-language pathologist in the state of Rhode Island. This testimony reflects my own thoughts. I write to express my strong opposition to House Bill 5082, entitled "AN ACT RELATING TO INSURANCE -- ACCIDENT AND SICKNESS, INSURANCE POLICIES -- PHYSICAL THERAPY COPAY," which limits copays, coinsurance or office deductibles for services of a physical therapist (PT) to the amount authorized for the services of a primary care physician or osteopath. My opposition is based on how the bill is written, as it excludes speech-language pathology (SLP) and occupational therapy services (OT). Many patients who require the services of a PT often also require related skilled services of an SLP and/or OT. Reducing the copay for one service provides a financial incentive for patients to only seek one service, rather than what is medically necessary to achieve optimal outcomes for the patient.

Residents of our state deserve access to all skilled services they require, rather than prioritization of one over the other. All three professions provide vital services to our residents. Although I am in favor of lowering copays, I must once again express my strong opposition to the bill as written. I would happily support an amendment that adds both SLP and OT services. Elevating one profession over the others is not only detrimental to patients, but to our professions as well.

Sincerely,

Rebecca Hockhousen, MS, CCC-SLP/L

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Speech-Language Pathologist

Licenses: AR (ABESPA), CA (DCA); CT (DPH); MA (DPL); NM (Board, PED); RI (DOH, RIDE); SC (LLR); TX (TDLR)