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From: Brian Elliano <BElliano@highbarhealth.com>
Sent: Tuesday, February 10, 2026 2:01 PM
To: House Health and Human Services Committee
Subject: Support for H7429

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Honorable Chair Donovan of the
House Committee on Health & Human Services
State House
Providence, RI 02903

February 10, 2026

Dear Chair Donovan and Members of the Health & Human Services Committee,

I write to you on behalf of the **American Physical Therapy Association (APTA)** in strong support of **H7429**.

As **Physical Therapists**, who make up a critical component of Rhode Island's healthcare workforce, we play a central role in helping patients recover from injury, manage pain, and restore function. Physical therapy (PT) is a cornerstone of evidence-based, non-invasive care, yet it remains out of reach for many Rhode Islanders due to steep copays. Cost is one of the leading reasons patients either do not pursue physical therapy at all or discontinue treatment prematurely.

The average copay for physical therapy is approximately \$30, but many patients face copays as high as \$65–\$95 per visit. Most individuals are recommended to receive 6–12 weeks of physical therapy, often at a frequency of 1–2 visits per week. As a result, patients may be required to pay between \$180 and \$720 out of pocket to complete a typical course of care. For many Rhode Islanders, this cost burden is simply untenable.

What is more, physical therapy is a critical tool in preventing acute pain and functional limitations from progressing into chronic pain and long-term disability. By investing in timely access to physical therapy, we can significantly reduce suffering and improve outcomes. Physical therapy is a safe, low-risk intervention, and when patients are unable to access it, they often pursue alternative care that is more invasive, more costly, and associated with greater risk—including additional specialist visits, injections, surgery, or long-term medication use.

Low back pain is the leading cause of disability in the United States, with approximately 13% of the population affected by chronic low back pain. Physical therapy is a first-line, evidence-based treatment for many forms of low back pain. By making physical therapy more accessible, we have a meaningful opportunity to prevent chronic low back pain or manage it more effectively without resorting to higher-risk interventions.

Preventing an acute condition from becoming a chronic one is not only good medicine, but also a critical strategy for controlling healthcare costs. When physical therapy successfully prevents chronic pain and

disability, we reduce the need for years of specialty referrals and costly, high-risk treatments, including—but not limited to—repeated steroid injections, surgical interventions, and chronic pain medication use.

By improving access to physical therapy, we can enhance patients' quality of life while also achieving long-term cost savings for Rhode Island's healthcare system.

For these reasons, we strongly encourage the Committee to support **House Bill 7429** and vote this important legislation out of Committee. We appreciate the opportunity to provide this testimony and welcome any follow-up discussion.

Respectfully submitted,

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