

**Dr Susan Parker DPT**

Physical Therapist and Partner at PappasOPT  
75 Sockanosset Crossroads Cranston, RI 02920  
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**To:**

Senate Committee on Health & Human Services  
Rhode Island General Assembly

**Re:** Testimony in Support of SB2468

My name is Susan Parker, and I am a practicing physical therapist with 38 years of experience treating patients in the outpatient setting.

Physical therapy occupies a distinctive and valuable role in our healthcare system. We consistently deliver strong clinical outcomes while keeping overall costs comparatively low. However, patients are increasingly facing financial obstacles that limit their access to this care. Rising copayments, coinsurance obligations, and high deductibles often make it difficult for patients to follow recommended treatment plans. When access is reduced, outcomes suffer and overall healthcare costs ultimately rise—for patients and insurers alike.

Evidence supports that initiating physical therapy at a higher frequency during the first one to two weeks—particularly for acute injuries—leads to more efficient recovery. Patients typically require fewer total visits, regain function more quickly, and are less likely to need expensive interventions such as advanced imaging, injections, or surgery. Unfortunately, the most common reason patients decline the recommended two to three visits per week is financial. Many of my patients pay \$80 or more per visit out of pocket. At two to three visits weekly, this becomes \$160–\$240 per week, which is simply not feasible for many individuals. As a result, they often reduce their attendance to once weekly or even every other week, prolonging recovery and increasing the likelihood of complications.

Physical therapists also serve as important entry-point providers within the healthcare system. We are trained to screen patients for red flags, refer appropriately to primary care or specialists when necessary, and independently manage musculoskeletal conditions. At a time when Rhode Island faces primary care shortages, physical therapists can safely and effectively reduce unnecessary physician visits for straightforward musculoskeletal issues. However, financial barriers that restrict patient access to therapy undermine this potential and contribute to higher overall healthcare costs.

Thank you for your consideration of this important issue.

Susan Parker  
PappasOPT