



February 24, 2022

RE: Opposition to the Physical Therapy Scope of Practice Bill

The Minnesota Medical Association, representing over 11,000 physicians and physicians in training, writes to express opposition to the scope of practice for physical therapists proposed in HF 3240 and outlined in the submitted Minnesota Chapter of the American Physical Therapy Association (APTA-MN) questionnaire to the House Health and Human Services Committee. Physical therapists are key members of the healthcare team for whom patients currently have direct access. We believe the expansions proposed increases the risk of patient harm.

We believe that the current 90-day cap on direct patient access plays a very important role in protecting patient safety and ensuring best utilization of resources. In the physical therapist's petition they state, *"Removing barriers increases the likelihood that individuals who have unmet health needs and who are underserved will seek early care for conditions that when allowed to become chronic, are much more expensive to treat."* We believe removing the requirement for a patient who is not improving with physical therapy to see a physician will have the exact opposite effect.

Most musculoskeletal conditions with regular physical therapy do resolve within 90 days. When they do not get resolved, there is concern over potential incorrect diagnosis, a developing complication, or an undiagnosed underlying condition such as a cancer or metastatic disease that is preventing the patient's improvement.

Also, the bill proposes removing the prohibition on physical therapists that are new to practice on treating a patient without a physician referral. Physicians cannot fully practice without at least one year of residency training, yet this bill would allow a physical therapist in the first year of practice to have unlimited practice without any oversight. The MMA believes that is a serious concern to patient health.

The submitted petitions states, *"The work duties of PTs are similar to that of physicians and other non-physician providers trained at the doctoral level."* The work duties of a physician are drastically different than that of a physical therapist. There is also great difference in the amount of training both receive, with physicians attending four-years of medical school followed by three to seven years of post-graduate residency training.

The MMA respectfully asks that you oppose HF 3240.

Sincerely,

Randy Rice, MD

President, Minnesota Medical Association