
Help APTA Maryland Pass Fair Copay Legislation in 2022

[Senate Bill 725 / House Bill 974](#)

Health Insurance - Physical Therapy - Copayments, Coinsurance, and Deductibles

The Opportunity is Here and Now to Make an Impact on the Patients and Communities, you Serve

Bill Sponsors

Delegate Nic Kipke (District 31B – Republican) & Senator Cory McCray (District 45 – Democrat)

What We Want Legislators to Know

- Physical therapy frequently requires multiple visits over an extended period of time, as the practice of physical therapy works in conjunction with the healing process.
- Many consumers are forced to pay nearly \$600 per month in out-of-pocket expenses to receive physical therapy services. This is in addition to the cost of health insurance paid by the consumer or their employer.
- Decisions by consumers to reduce the frequency or duration of their care or not to even initiate physical therapy has led to poor outcomes and complications, which only lead to higher costs for health care in the future.

In our current insurance system:

- Frequently physical therapy patients encounter challenges with commercial carriers through the imposition of high cost and wide-ranging copay and cost share requirements.
- In some cases, **more than 50% of the cost burden falls on the patient through cost-share fees imposed by the insurer.**
- **This becomes a tremendous financial barrier to care when the patient is asked to pay more out of pocket than what the insurer reimburses the PT.**
- **High copays can lead to patients managing chronic or acute pain with low-cost opioids, which can lead to addiction, dependency, and death.**
- **High copays are a significant disincentive to care that disproportionately affects disadvantaged communities and lower-income patients.**
- Insurance providers are setting co-pay rates at a level that has shown to decrease the utilization of physical therapy services. [This affects all patients but has disproportionately impacted lower-income patients].

The Data:

- Optum Health did a study on removing co pay for PT and it showed decreased odds of short-term and long-term opioid. ¹
- insured members use more rehabilitation services as cost-sharing is reduced and use less rehabilitation services as cost-sharing is increased. ²

In response, this bill would require insurance companies to set copay rates for physical therapy services no more than copay rates set for that of a primary care visit.

Physical therapy is less than 3% of the healthcare utilized by patients, therefore, we do not believe this to be a burden on health insurance providers. Furthermore, patients who utilize physical therapy services earlier on in an injury have been shown to recover faster and reduce hospital utilization. Thus, if a patient is not dissuaded from using these services by higher copays, it would save the insurers money in the long run.

1. Lewis E Kazis,1 Omid Ameli,1,2 James Rothendler,1 Brigid Garrity,1 Howard Cabral,3 Christine McDonough,4 Kathleen Carey,1 Michael Stein,1 Darshak Sanghavi,2 David Elton,5 Julie Fritz,6 Robert Saper7

2. Milliman Colorado Department of Public Health and the Environment (CDPHE) Report - Cost of Rehabilitation Services, October 28, 2015