

May 6, 2014

Testimony of S. Joshua Szabo, M.D.

Senate Bill 594, Printer's No. 1943

I respectfully ask that you allow this letter to serve as my written testimony regarding Senate Bill 594, Printer's No. 1943 (SB 594) and include this letter as part of the official hearing record. SB 594 is of concern to me in my role as a licensed physician practicing in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. For the reasons set forth below I strongly support SB 594 and its underlying premise of the need in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania for a mechanism to establish, and subsequently enforce, reasonable cost sharing amounts for physical therapy, occupational therapy, and chiropractic care.

As a sports medicine orthopedic surgeon, I routinely treat soft tissue injuries such as tendon and ligament tears. These injuries typically have a more protracted recovery due to the fact that these tissues heal more slowly than bone injuries. These injuries also are more complex as they are adjacent or within articulations, predisposing them to stiffness. Needless to say, many of these injuries require surgical intervention, and postoperatively need care of a skilled physical therapist to ensure an optimal clinical outcome. Recently, I have observed patients electing to forego physical therapy for monetary reasons either a copay that cannot afford or capitated number of visits. Regardless these same patients have experienced suboptimal outcomes, and, in a couple of instances, had to undergo secondary surgical procedures. This trend has coincided with more prevalent high deductible insurance policies.

For the reasons illustrated above, I strongly support SB 594. Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to provide testimony regarding this legislation.

Very truly yours,

/s/ S. Joshua Szabo, M.D.