

Nov. 30, 2022

The Honorable Tom Carper
513 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Sen. Carper:

On behalf of the undersigned organizations, we write to convey our deep appreciation and thanks for your sponsorship of S. 5. This important legislation is aimed at reducing administrative burden and improving patient access to Medicare Part B outpatient therapy services provided in private practices by addressing the outdated direct supervision requirement of occupational therapy assistants and physical therapist assistants.

Access to occupational therapy and physical therapy services, especially in rural, medically underserved, and health professional shortage areas, often depends on the availability of physical therapist assistants and occupational therapy assistants. S. 5 would support the therapy workforce by deferring to state licensure law for the required level of supervision of OTAs and PTAs; in 49 states the standard is general supervision. This change in supervision will provide greater flexibility and improved access, as well as cost savings. A coalition of provider and trade groups [commissioned a study](#) by Dobson & DaVanzo, which shows this common-sense change could save Medicare approximately \$271 million.

Access to health care services is necessary for better health outcomes, yet Medicare beneficiaries, particularly those who reside in rural and underserved areas, face a variety of barriers. The rehabilitation therapy sector is still impacted by COVID-19 and a significant labor shortage, even though we have provided services throughout the public health emergency. To compound the challenges even more, the impact of the 15% cut to Medicare Part B services furnished by occupational therapy assistants and physical therapist assistants that went into effect on Jan. 1, 2022, has been devastating to the therapy workforce, especially for those who are more likely to be providing care in underserved and rural communities. We stand ready to continue working with your office in the 118th Congress to address these additional challenges that impact patient access and exacerbate health disparities in underserved and rural areas.

Again, thank you for your leadership on S. 5 and for your support of therapy services under Medicare. Your work will ensure Medicare beneficiaries have appropriate access to these services during challenging times.

Sincerely,

Advion (Formerly Known as the National Association for the Support of Long Term Care)

Alliance for Physical Therapy Quality and Innovation

American Occupational Therapy Association

American Physical Therapy Association

APTA Private Practice

Athletico

National Association of Rehabilitation Providers and Agencies