

Private Practice Physical Therapists

Small business professionals restoring function to America - one patient at a time.

October 8, 2015

Senator Mark Kirk
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Representative Morgan Griffith
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Representative Joyce Beatty
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Senator Kirk, Representative Griffith, and Representative Beatty:

The Private Practice Section (PPS) of the American Physical Therapy Association has strongly endorsed H.R.2799/S. 1465, *Furthering Access to Stroke Telemedicine (FAST) Act of 2015*. PPS commends you for your leadership and appreciates your efforts to reduce barriers such as lengthy travel times to primary stroke centers that rob patients of treatment which can improve their lives, prevent long-term disability, and reduce the need for extensive physical therapy.

The over 4200 members of PPS own and operate small businesses that provide convenient, cost-effective rehabilitative therapy to patients across the spectrum of impairments and functional limitations secondary to neurologic and/or musculoskeletal conditions. The PPS endeavors to foster the growth, economic viability, and business success, of physical therapist-owned physical therapy services provided for the benefit of the public.

Time is of the essence in treating stroke. “Telestroke”—the use of telemedicine in the treatment of stroke—has proven highly effective in improving patient access to quality stroke care. However, barriers and delayed access to treatment remain that can increase survivability, prevent long-term disability, and foster conditions for the patient to achieve a much higher functional outcome. Current law does not allow for Medicare reimbursement of telestroke services when the patient originates in an urban or suburban area, which is where approximately 94 percent of all strokes occur. The *FAST Act* would provide Medicare beneficiaries who reside in these areas access to important immediate care via telemedicine.

Medicare continues to lag behind the states in reimbursement for care delivered via telemedicine. Under H.R.2799/S.1465, Medicare would expand access to stroke telehealth services under Medicare by covering evaluation or intervention of an acute stroke that is

provided within the evidence-based timeframe, covering any site where this originating treatment takes place; and waiving any originating site facility fee for locations where this evaluation or treatment takes place. This provision is based on Section 105(a)(1) of the Telehealth Enhancement Act (H.R.3306 and S.2662 in the 113th Congress).

This patient-centric policy change is an essential modernization of Medicare reimbursement policy. PPS greatly appreciates your leadership on this issue and pledges its support for the *Furthering Access to Stroke Telemedicine (FAST) Act*.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Terrence C. Brown". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping underline.

Terrence Brown, PT, DPT
President, Private Practice Section of APTA