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**Ohio Occupational Therapy, Physical Therapy, and Athletic Trainers Board**

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Columbus, Ohio 43215-6108

Governor  
*John R. Kasich*

Chairman Huffman, Vice Chairwoman Gavarone, Ranking Member Antonio, and Members of the House Health Committee, thank you for allowing me the opportunity to present proponent testimony on House Bill 131 on behalf of the Physical Therapy Section of the Occupational Therapy, Physical Therapy and Athletic Trainers Board. My name is James T. Lee, PT, DPT, NCS and I am the chair of the Physical Therapy Section.

The mission of the Board is to actively promote and protect the health of the citizens of Ohio through the effective regulation of the profession of physical therapy. All actions taken by the Board are done with the idea of how will this decision meet our public mission. It is in this light that the Board supports House Bill 131.

The ability for a licensed physical therapist to have the ability to order diagnostic tests directly is in the best interest of the consumer of physical therapy services. Under the current Ohio Physical Therapy Practice act, if a physical therapist feels that the determination of the most appropriate treatment plan would best be served by having diagnostic imaging of the patients, the PT must have a patient make an appointment with their primary care physician to have the diagnostic imaging ordered and completed. This disrupts the continuity of care and adds increased costs for the patient who can benefit from physical therapy. That is why the Board supports the proposed change as being in the best interest of the consumers of therapy services in Ohio.

The other main change in HB 131 will make it explicit that a physical therapist can determine a diagnosis to treat a patient's physical impairments, functional limitations and physical disabilities. Under current practice, when a physical therapist evaluates the patient and determines the appropriate treatment intervention plan, they are, in essence establishing a diagnosis, but cannot legally use that term. This change simply clarifies what a physical therapist is doing in everyday practice.

The Model Practice Act for Physical Therapy, which is developed by the Federation of State Boards of Physical Therapy, defines the practice of physical therapy to include "examining, evaluating and testing patients... in order to determine a diagnosis, prognosis and plan of treatment intervention." In addition, at least 21 other states have language in their physical therapy practice act authorizing a physical therapist to determine a diagnosis.

Under the Ohio Physical Therapy Practice Act, any newly licensed individual must hold a Doctorate of Physical Therapy. Key components of the curriculum required for all DPT programs include education on determining a diagnosis that guides future patient management. There are currently 10 CAPTE accredited DPT programs in the state of Ohio. Ohio University graduated its first DPT class in 2006. By 2009, 80% of the programs in Ohio were at the DPT level and since 2011, all 10 programs award the DPT degree. In addition, many licensees who were licensed before the DPT requirement have gone back to school to earn the doctorate degree.

Thank you for your consideration of this important update to the Ohio Physical Therapy Practice Act. Please feel free to contact me with any questions this committee may have.