

Proponent Testimony – House Bill 131  
House Health Committee  
May 24, 2017

Chairman Huffman, Vice Chairwoman Gavarone, Ranking Member Antonio, and Members of the House Health Committee, my name is Dr. John Dewitt. I am a doctor of physical therapy with a specialty in sports physical therapy. I practice at The Ohio State University. In addition to working with patients and athletes, I also serve as an Assistant Clinical Professor and Director of Physical Therapy Residencies and Fellowships in the Division of Physical Therapy at Ohio State, with a focus on sports and orthopedic physical therapy.

I am board certified in sports physical therapy and have been practicing for over 16 years treating athletes of all levels of competition, including 2 years with the NFL and the United States Olympic Committee Sports Medicine Division. Additionally, am the past Chair of the American Board of Physical Therapy Residency and Fellowship Education.

I am here to offer proponent testimony on House Bill 131, sponsored by Vice Chairwoman Gavarone and Representative Reineke. I am testifying on behalf of myself and the Ohio Physical Therapy Association.

As introduced, House Bill 131 will make two important updates to the physical therapists practice act. This legislation updates the law governing the practice of physical therapy to make clear PTs can diagnose physical impairment and disability and determine a prognosis and intervention plan. The bill also adds the ability for PTs to order tests (such as diagnostic imaging) that are interpreted by other licensed health care professionals.

Physical therapists in Ohio are highly qualified and rigorously trained in all areas of the neuromusculoskeletal system. All physical therapy programs in Ohio and nationwide are doctorate level programs and accredited by The Commission on Accreditation in Physical Therapy Education. This includes both diagnosis and imaging as standard and required elements of their education programs. At OSU, all students complete an 8 week course on diagnostic imaging and are trained on clinical decision rules to appropriately order these tests.

As a PT, I pride myself on offering quality care, pain management and injury recovery without the use of opioids. Physical therapy has proven to be at the front lines of patient rehabilitation.

Physical therapists in Ohio practice under a direct access law. This means we can see and treat patients without a referral from a physician. Ohio's direct access law has been working effectively for over a dozen years. It is also important to note, that should House Bill 131 be enacted, physical therapists would still be required to refer patients to another healthcare provider should the patient's condition be outside the scope of practice of the physical therapists. Physical therapists work in coordination with the physician community and we certainly value that relationship. This collaboration occurs on a daily basis in our practice. Prior to return to sport, I as the physical therapist evaluate impairments and function to ensure the athlete meets our criteria to return and work closely with the physician, athletic trainer, athlete, parents and others on the team to ensure they return to the field without re-injury.

House Bill 131 streamlines cost effective delivery of physical therapy in a manner that will reduce unnecessary health care costs for the patient and allow for optimal care for patients.

Mr. Chairman, thank you for giving me the opportunity to provide testimony today in support of House Bill 131. I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.