

## California Senate Passes Bill Allowing Direct Access to Physical Therapist Services

Written by Australian Business

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SACRAMENTO, Calif., Sept. 10, 2013 /PRNewswire/ -- California's Senate passed AB 1000 (Wieckowski/Maienschein) to allow Californians to directly access physical therapist services. The bill passed off the Senate Floor and now goes back to the Assembly to approve amendments before heading to the Governor's desk. Sponsored by the California Physical Therapy Association (CPTA), AB 1000 provides consumers with the option to directly access quality, cost-effective and safe physical therapist services without a physician diagnosis. "Our health care delivery system is under scrutiny, and our policymakers are looking for ways to increase accessibility and affordability of care," said Dr.

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ames Syms

, PT, DSc, ATC, SCS and President of CPTA. "We believe consumers have a right to choose qualified providers for timely, safe and cost-effective physical therapist services. AB 1000 accomplishes this very thing."

AB 1000 amends the California Business and Professions Code Section 2620 to allow consumers to initiate physical therapy treatment directly from a licensed physical therapist, without a physician referral, for up to 45 calendar days or 12 visits, whichever occurs first and after which time the patient must be seen by a physician who must sign the plan of care.

"In this era of health care reform and severe physician shortages, keeping patients waiting for a physician diagnosis when seeking relief from pain and physical impairments, which can be addressed by a qualified physical therapist, no longer makes sense," said Syms. "We are pleased the Legislature endorses AB 1000 and the right of individuals to access early intervention to physical therapy treatment leading to a decrease in the duration of a disability, reduced pain and a quicker recovery."

AB 1000 is consistent with the Senate Office of Research and the Senate Health Committee report, which recommends health care providers be allowed to practice at "the top of their licenses."

"Physical therapists are experts in human function and mobility and skilled in examining, evaluating and classifying impairments for and treating patients," commented Syms. "The bottom line - with the implementation of AB 1000, Californians will be able to receive immediate relief from pain, injuries and impairments while saving them time and money by eliminating unnecessary office visits and co-payments."

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California remains the only Western state without direct access to physical therapy treatment. Alaska

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Arizona

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Hawaii

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Nevada

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Oregon

and

Washington

already allow consumer direct access.

The bill also addresses the issue of corporate employment by allowing any professional corporation listed in the Moscone-Knox Act to employ all professions listed in the California Business and Professions Code, including physical therapists, while enhancing anti-referral-for-profit laws currently in effect by requiring a 14-point font written disclosure of financial interest and notice that a patient may go elsewhere for services.

"With respect to the corporate practice of medicine, CPTA continues to be concerned," said Syms. "True health care reform should put the patient first and eliminate conflicts of interest where providers are choosing profits over patients. CPTA will continue to support and advance policies that eliminate such conflicts of interest."

*CPTA is the largest voice for the physical therapy profession in the state of California and the third largest physical therapy association in the world. CPTA is a chapter of the American Physical Therapy Association, representing more than 82,000 physical therapists and physical therapist assistants nationwide.*

SOURCE California Physical Therapy Association (CPTA)