

5-8-2025

Testimony of Kimberly Chonko, Owner & Occupational Therapist (Kid O'Therapy, LLC)

My name is Kimberly Chonko, and I am the owner of Kid O'Therapy, LLC, an outpatient occupational therapy and physical therapy clinic specializing in pediatric rehabilitation for children with special needs. Our practice has served thousands of children over the past fifteen years in the Topsham, Brunswick, Bath areas, servicing Cumberland, Sagadahoc, MidCoast, Androscoggin, and Kennebec counties.

I am writing today in strong support of (L.D. 1785) Bill "An Act to Encourage Competition by Requiring Independent Health Care Provider Cost-of-living Adjustments in Health Insurance Contracts" (HP1196)

As a provider who specializes in pediatric rehabilitation of children with special needs and as an administrative owner, I want to thank you for recognizing the administrative and financial challenges and burdens that small private practices face, dealing with declining insurance reimbursements and increasing overhead administrative costs. There is a shortage of pediatric therapists, in addition to a nationwide shortage of occupational therapists and physical therapists. Between rising wages, competitive salaries, increasing regulatory requirements for cybersecurity, additional costs of HIPAA-compliant platforms, and stagnant and declining reimbursement rates from commercial insurance companies, delivering and sustaining services is becoming increasingly more difficult. There are more therapists leaving pediatrics seeking larger industries, including orthopedic settings, hospitals and nursing homes, or inpatient facilities where they can be paid a higher rate since the facility can bill a facility code to receive a higher reimbursement, which smaller outpatient practices are not able to do. This leaves smaller outpatient private practices at a financial disadvantage as well as at a staffing limitation, often taking months or years to find replacement staff and unable to service children's immediate therapy needs for early intervention, which is critically needed in the moment.

I am in strong support of this bill as it would allow smaller healthcare practices the ability to be competitive with the cost of living index to pay and attract therapists to the field, and help offset the rising expenses of additional healthcare overhead that it takes to run a small business in the state of Maine.

Thank you for your time and commitment to trying to improve reimbursements for small private practices in healthcare, especially those serving Maine's children and families with special needs.

Sincerely,
Kimberly Chonko, MSOTR/L
Kid O'Therapy, LLC
Topsham, Maine

(207) 844-8287

Kimberly Chonko
Topsham
LD 1785

Testimony of Kimberly Chonko, Owner & Occupational Therapist (Kid O'Therapy, LLC)

My name is Kimberly Chonko, and I am the owner of Kid O'Therapy, LLC, an outpatient occupational therapy and physical therapy clinic specializing in pediatric rehabilitation for children with special needs. Our practice has served thousands of children over the past fifteen years in the Topsham, Brunswick, Bath areas, servicing Cumberland, Sagadahoc, MidCoast, Androscoggin, and Kennebec counties.

I am writing today in strong support of (L.D. 1785) Bill "An Act to Encourage Competition by Requiring Independent Health Care Provider Cost-of-living Adjustments in Health Insurance Contracts" (HP1196)

As a provider who specializes in pediatric rehabilitation of children with special needs and as an administrative owner, I want to thank you for recognizing the administrative and financial challenges and burdens that small private practices face, dealing with declining insurance reimbursements and increasing overhead administrative costs. There is a shortage of pediatric therapists, in addition to a nationwide shortage of occupational therapists and physical therapists. Between rising wages, competitive salaries, increasing regulatory requirements for cybersecurity, additional costs of HIPAA-compliant platforms, and stagnant and declining reimbursement rates from commercial insurance companies, delivering and sustaining services is becoming increasingly more difficult. There are more therapists leaving pediatrics seeking larger industries, including orthopedic settings, hospitals and nursing homes, or inpatient facilities where they can be paid a higher rate since the facility can bill a facility code to receive a higher reimbursement, which smaller outpatient practices are not able to do. This leaves smaller outpatient private practices at a financial disadvantage as well as a staffing limitation, often taking months or years to find replacement staff and unable to service children's immediate therapy needs for early intervention, which is critically needed in the moment.

I am in strong support of this bill as it would allow smaller healthcare private practices the ability to be competitive with the cost of living index to pay and attract therapists to the field, and help offset the rising expenses of additional healthcare overhead that it takes to run a small business in the state of Maine.

Thank you for your time and commitment to trying to improve reimbursements for small private practices in healthcare, especially those serving Maine's children and families with special needs.

Sincerely,
Kimberly Chonko, MSOTR/L
Kid O'Therapy, LLC
Topsham, Maine
(207) 844-8287