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Senator Bailey, Representative Mathieson and Honorable Members of the HCIFS Committee,

My name is Kathryn Longhurst, and I live in Wilton. My husband, Justin, is a physical therapist. It has long been his dream to own a private practice, and we were fortunate enough to be able to purchase Allied Physical Therapy in Farmington a little over 4 years ago. Allied PT has been in business in Farmington for more than 25 years under the previous owner and is recognized in our community as providing excellent, evidence-based care to our area.

As the office manager and vice president of Allied Physical Therapy, I am writing to outline some of the challenges that our practice faces as a small clinic in a rural area. We are asking you to vote ought to pass on LD 1785.

In just 4 years as owners, we have seen a dramatic increase in the cost to do business. Pricing for every supply, piece of equipment, and service has increased, foremost being payroll expenses. We care deeply for our staff. We strive to make our clinic a positive work environment with desirable benefits and competitive pay. Unfortunately, these costs have continued to rise, but reimbursement rates have remained the same. One of the most difficult challenges for us has been to keep up with competitive pay. My husband and I feel the overwhelming responsibility to provide stable employment for our staff, but we are currently facing a crisis in being able to keep up financially.

We also care deeply for our patients and want to provide excellent, high-quality care to them, but we are facing decisions to possibly go out of network to maintain enough revenue. This would result in possibly losing some patients who may not be able to pay out of pocket. Our area is one that has many folks struggling financially and this would be devastating to many of them.

In our community, patients can choose to go to physical therapy at our clinic, or at the hospital. What they often don't know when they choose to go to the hospital is that they will pay far more for their PT care there when compared with ours, or other small private practices.

Hospitals are able to charge more for the same codes and treatment that we provide simply because they are a facility setting. Our clinic, as an office setting, is also less equipped to negotiate reimbursement rates with insurance companies. We are only able to keep a small administrative staff whose primary duties are to manage the burdensome insurance rules regarding prior authorizations and other limits in a patient's care. The reimbursement as well as other insurance requirements is predatory to small businesses such as ours who do not have the negotiating power of a large group.

I strongly urge you to consider the significant challenges and predatory tactics which target small businesses and clinics such as ours and vote ought to pass on LD 1785. I can be reached to answer any additional questions you may have at kathryn@alliedptmaine.com.

Sincerely



Kathryn Longhurst

Vice President

Allied Physical Therapy