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This testimony is in support of LD 1357, An Act To Require Private Insurance Coverage for Postpartum Care.

I strongly believe that pelvic floor physical therapy, as well as other important postpartum care services such as mental health support, should be the standard of care and accessible for all birth givers. As a healthcare provider I became passionate about the specialty of pelvic floor health well before having my own children, but it was going through my own childbirth experiences that truly fueled my passion and my life's work.

During a birth giver's pregnancy, the ACOG guidelines include 15 visits with their birth provider and there is often just 1 postpartum visit at 6 weeks. There is sadly, very little guidance to support the birthgiver on what to expect and how to move forward towards healing during the postpartum period. This is a disservice and can be incredibly isolating as well as lead to significant physical and emotional limitations throughout their lives when not addressed. These conditions can have lasting effects on our quality of life in so many ways. The "clearance to return to exercise and sex" at 6 weeks can also be significantly misleading to birthgivers and provides little real guidance on how they should return to exercise safely or how to navigate pain or other physical limitations that may persist. Regardless of whether birth was via vaginal delivery or C-section, the abdomen and pelvic floor (among so many other regions of the body) go through significant tissue trauma and changes. Pelvic floor physical therapists are experts in how to evaluate the pelvic floor and how to address these conditions as well as guide postpartum people back to exercise and activities safely.

Throughout my career working with birth giver after birth giver (even those 40 years postpartum) the common thread I hear is "I wish I had known sooner." I wish I could have known there was something I could do, and "why doesn't everyone receive this care after they have a baby?"

If this bill passes, it will be a huge step forward in providing access to the postpartum care that all birth givers deserve.

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