



Physicians Caring for Texans

House Public Health Committee
Testimony by Jimmy Widmer, MD, Texas Medical Association
House Bill 4099 By Rep. Harris Davila
April 14, 2025

Good morning, my name is Dr. Jimmy Widmer, and I am an internal medicine physician from Temple. On behalf of the Texas Medical Association and its more than 59,000 members, we thank Chair VanDeaver, Vice Chair Campos, and the members of the House Public Health Committee for the opportunity to respectfully testify in opposition to House Bill 4099.

TMA has several concerns with this legislation. The bill would erase important patient-safety protections found in a thoughtfully crafted law from just three sessions ago. In 2019, organized medicine and physical therapists reached a significant compromise, allowing patients direct access to physical therapists but with time limits to ensure patients requiring a medical diagnosis would receive the care they needed.

Now just six years later, this bill would erase that compromise and water down those patient protections.

Patients can currently seek direct care from a physical therapist without an accompanying referral for 10 to 15 business days' worth of treatment, depending on their level of training.

A simple injury should resolve itself during this timeframe. If the injury does not resolve, something more serious could be driving the patient's symptoms, and they should seek the care of a physician for a proper evaluation and medical diagnosis. For many injuries, an improper treatment delay can lead to long-term damage.

For example, a patient of mine had been seeing a physical therapist for pain but the patient's condition was not improving as it should. The physical therapist notified me. I saw the patient and ordered imaging that revealed structural issues. We were able to escalate the patient to a physician specialist for care rather than continuing to undergo physical therapy that would have been inappropriate.

Physical therapists play an important role in the team-based care model. However, the reality is that physical therapists are neither licensed nor trained to offer a medical diagnosis. This could involve a history and physical, lab work, specific imaging or an understanding of how another part of the human body's system could be the underlying cause of the pain. For more complicated injuries and ailments that do not resolve within a few weeks, the medical diagnostic tools of a physician are necessary for appropriate patient care.

Also, it is important to note that the 2023 Texas Legislature voted down a similar measure, House Bill 2553, on the house floor with 93 "no" votes.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify, and I am happy to answer any questions.