

# OPPOSE SB 291 SEN. MILLS



**LOUISIANA STATE  
MEDICAL SOCIETY**

## **BAD MEDICINE FOR LOUISIANA CITIZENS - UNSAFE ACCESS TO PHYSICAL THERAPISTS**

**SB 291** by Sen. Mills eliminates restrictions on implementation of physical therapy services without a prescription or referral from a physician. If passed, **SB 291** would allow physical therapists to treat patients directly and indefinitely, without ever receiving an assessment or diagnosis from a medical doctor.

Federal regulation would make this legislation impossible to implement. Medicare requires physician approval for all physical therapy treatment plans.

### **HOW WILL THIS BILL ENDANGER THE PUBLIC?**

Physical therapists are not trained to diagnose. Effective medical treatments could be delayed with life-threatening outcomes. This is a drastic expansion of the physical therapy scope of practice beyond training.

### **WHAT IS BEST FOR THE PATIENT?**

Each professional working in their area of expertise and sharing information with each other. This bill is dangerous by allowing physical therapists to treat patients beyond their scope of education and training. Louisiana Orthopaedic Association and 10 statewide health care organizations are opposing this legislation due to patient safety concerns. When patients go to a physical therapist, the goal is to receive *treatment*, not a *diagnosis*. When a patient sees a medical doctor, the goal is the *diagnosis* followed by a decision about the *best treatment* - drawing from the full spectrum of medical knowledge. The best treatment could include physical therapy. Physicians will continue to prescribe physical therapy to patients who can benefit from this kind of treatment. But a patient with a health problem needs to be seen by a physician to truly evaluate the source of their symptoms or discomfort.

CREDENTIALS	PHYSICIANS	PHYSICAL THERAPISTS
DEGREE	<b>MD (Doctor of Medicine)</b>	DPT (Doctor of Physical Therapy) / PT
GRADUATE EDUCATION	<b>7-9 years</b>	3 years
DIAGNOSTIC TOOLS	<b>Imaging, X-ray, Lab</b>	Assessment of function
TREATMENTS	<b>Prescriptions, Injections, Chemotherapy, Radiation, Endoscopy, Surgery</b>	Exercises, Mobilization, Manipulation, Modalities, Activities or Devices

### **MAJOR OBSTACLES TO HEALTH CARE ACCESS ARE THE LACK OF:**

1. Payment
2. Transportation
3. Navigation of the health care system

### **LEGISLATORS GRANTED PHYSICAL THERAPISTS DIRECT ACCESS IN 2003**

- Patients within 90 days of medical diagnosis
- Nursing home and home health patients
- Developmentally disabled children

### **PHYSICAL THERAPISTS SHOULD NOT HAVE UNRESTRICTED ACCESS TO ALL PATIENTS**

**3**

Only 3 states, South Dakota, Maryland, and Vermont have unrestricted access.

**48**

47 states and Washington, DC have restrictions, provisions, or penalties

### **CAN YOU DIAGNOSE THE FOLLOWING CONDITIONS ASSOCIATED WITH BACK AND NECK PAIN?**

- CANCEROUS TUMORS
- PLEURISY
- HEART ATTACKS
- GALLBLADDER INFECTIONS
- SPINAL FRACTURES OR INJURIES
- DEGENERATIVE SPINAL DISKS
- KIDNEY STONES
- AORTIC ANEURYSMS
- RUPTURED SPINAL DISKS
- INFECTIONS OF THE VERTBRA

**NEITHER CAN A  
PHYSICAL THERAPIST**

**OPPOSE  
SB 291**

***This legislation threatens the quality and integrity of our health care system and the patient safety measures which guide it.***