

FACT SHEET

SO EVERYBODY CAN MOVE ALASKA

What is the public health problem?

Alaskans living with limb loss and limb difference face **significant barriers to accessing life-changing orthotic and prosthetic (O&P) care.**

Essential devices for physical activities, water activities, and personal hygiene are being denied as “not medically necessary”, leaving patients with unmanageable out of pocket expenses. Without these devices, individuals are unable to work, play, or care for themselves - leading to worsening health problems and further medical expenses.

Without health plan coverage, adults, children, and families are forced to:

- **Incur prohibitive out-of-pocket costs** (ranging from \$5,000 - \$50,000)
- **Risk harm/injury** using an improper device
- **Live sedentary lifestyles** with costly health complications including obesity
- **Struggle with autonomous personal hygiene** due to very limited access to a prosthesis or orthosis for the shower

Individuals **need specialized prostheses and orthoses for physical activity**, recreation, and hygiene purposes. Currently there is not adequate coverage for these devices.

- Children with disabilities are **4.5 times less likely** to engage in physical activity than children without disabilities [1]
- Every day prostheses are built and designed for walking; they are not designed for frequent running, jumping, climbing, or sports

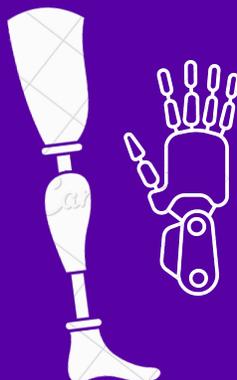
How does the proposed legislation fix it?

This bill updates Alaska’s prosthetic and orthotic coverage law to ensure that health insurance plans include prostheses and orthoses needed for physical activity and personal hygiene when deemed medically necessary.

What is this legislation’s potential fiscal and social impact?

- Covering devices for physical activity and hygiene has a minimal impact on insurance premiums while providing long term social and fiscal benefits to improve health access and equity for the approximately 10,701 Alaskans living with limb loss or limb difference
- Based on a fiscal analysis done on the impact of this legislation in multiple states, it was conservatively estimated that the average cost of this bill in Alaska is \$0.05 per member per month (PMPM), while ultimately leading to net state healthcare savings of \$26,435,033 [2]
- How this legislation actually lowers overall healthcare costs:
 - The cost of inactivity is approximately \$2,500/year per person,
 - Knee or hip problems resulting from lack of appropriate prosthetic care can result in increased healthcare costs ranging from \$80,000 to \$150,000 over the course of a single patient’s lifetime. [3]
 - One study showed that providing Medicaid prosthetic coverage decreased overall healthcare costs by \$1,177.60 per patient. [3]
 - People with disabilities who are physically active are more likely to be employed, advance in their careers, and have improved physical and mental health. [4]

We believe
**MOVEMENT
IS MEDICINE**



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JUSTINE



Justine lives in Anchorage, and has always prioritized getting outside for hiking, trail running, backpacking, and climbing. After severe trauma to her ankle and subsequent complications kept her from accessing the places she loves most, amputation came up as an option that could allow her to return to an active lifestyle. When she learned about the potential financial burden created by lack of coverage for a prosthesis designed for recreation, she felt that something must be done. Of all the barriers that could prevent someone from living in a way that brings them joy, lack of coverage and prohibitive costs should be the most obvious one to remove.

JUSTUS



Justus, 10 from Seward, loves swimming, soccer, hiking, and baseball. The last three would not be possible without a prosthetic. Swimming would be immensely improved with an adaptive prosthetic. This baseball season his prosthetic leg snapped while playing short stop. He still managed to bat a home run the next inning with a pinch runner. A backup leg for breakdowns would keep him in the game. We live 2.5 hours from the closest prosthetist. Every visit requires a full day.

SUPPORTING ORGANIZATIONS



FACT SHEET

Sponsors:
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[1] American College of Sports Medicine, *Why We Must Prioritize Equitable Access to Physical Activity for Children with Disabilities*: <https://www.acsm.org/blog-detail/acsm-blog/2021/03/22/prioritize-equitable-access-to-physical-activity-for-children-with-disabilities>

[2] Malouff, S., Cain, J., & Cartwright, S. (2024). A Multi-State Analysis of the Fiscal Impact of Commercial Insurance Coverage for General-Use & Activity-Specific Prosthetic and Orthotic Devices in the United States. Retrieved from <https://esmed.org/MRA/mra/article/view/5104/99193547842>

[3] Amputee Coalition, *Help Us Introduce the Insurance Fairness for Amputees Act*: <https://www.amputee-coalition.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/insurance-fairness-amputees-act.pdf>

[4] Move United, *Sports and Employment Among Americans with Disabilities*: <https://moveunitedsport.org/app/uploads/2021/06/Sports-and-Employment-Among-People-With-Disabilities-2-1.pdf>

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