

March 17, 2026  
Alaska State Legislature  
ATTN: Representative Andy Josephson  
Alaska State Capitol  
Juneau, Alaska 99801

Dear Members of the Alaska Legislature,

My name is Alison Kahn, and I am a constituent of District 12 in Anchorage, Alaska, writing in strong support of House Bill 272. I am an active Alaskan — I ski, hike, bike, and climb, and I moved here for the outdoor opportunities this state offers. I am also a certified prosthetist orthotist (CPO), and it is in that role that I am most directly affected by this bill. I work with patients experiencing limb loss and limb difference, neurological conditions affecting their extremities, and other diagnoses that impact mobility, safety, and independence. My role includes patient evaluation, device recommendation, collaboration with care teams, clinical justification, and the fabrication, fitting, and adjustment of prostheses and orthoses. The goal is not simply to restore basic ambulation — it is to allow these individuals to achieve their potential. For many patients, that requires more than one device.

Current insurance policy operates on the unrealistic expectation that a single device can replicate the full function of a human limb. Activity-specific prosthetic and orthotic devices are widely available and straightforward in their purpose — yet patients are routinely denied coverage, even when deemed medically necessary by a physician. These devices directly improve mobility, independence, and quality of life. As a healthcare provider, my responsibility includes ensuring that patients can safely participate in all aspects of life: occupational, domestic, and recreational. This may mean providing a prosthetic running blade to a runner who lost her leg to a drunk driver, fabricating a lightweight ankle foot orthosis (AFO) for a child with Cerebral Palsy so he can safely participate in the same activities as his peers, or supplying a simple waterproof prosthesis for showering or fishing.

I frequently must inform patients that their insurer is unlikely to cover a prescribed device, and that they may be responsible for several thousand dollars out of pocket. It is not always a straightforward denial — current policy does not explicitly exclude these devices, but insurers routinely deny them as "same or similar" to a device the patient already has. Because of this, before pursuing an additional prosthesis or orthosis, patients must sign a document acknowledging they may owe the full amount for the device. Most will not take that risk, so they simply do not try. Meanwhile, the American Heart Association recommends that adults get at least 150 minutes per week of

moderate-intensity aerobic activity. Providing the devices required to accomplish this should be considered medically necessary.

As prosthetists and orthotists, we should not accept that the "best we can do" is piecing together spare parts just so someone can have a prosthesis to wear in the shower. People deserve fair access to the devices that keep them active, healthy, and able to maintain their independence. Holding individuals to lower mobility expectations simply because they might need multiple devices to reach the same goals an able-bodied person achieves without a second thought — is a form of discrimination. The Veterans Affairs (VA) and Worker's Compensation already recognize this, routinely covering activity-specific devices when deemed medically necessary by the providers. Private and State insurance should be no different.

The result of this lack of access is not just reduced mobility and poorer quality of life, but ironically, also higher overall healthcare costs. The cost of inactivity, obesity, and cardiovascular complications outweigh the cost of covering the necessary devices. Additionally, individuals who attempt to meet their recommended exercise goals — or simply want to stand in the shower despite an inadequate device — face significantly elevated risk of falls, injury, and device damage, all of which come at an increased cost to insurers. This problem is compounded in Alaska, where individuals in remote communities may have no backup device when theirs fails. A repair can require a flight to Anchorage and an extended absence from work and daily life — time that costs patients not just mobility, but income and independence. Providing activity-specific devices in addition to an everyday device reduces breakdowns, emergency repairs, and the hardship of patients being left without the limb or brace they depend on.

Movement is not a luxury — it is a human right. That means the ability to participate fully in work, in the outdoor life that so many of us love about Alaska, and in the everyday moments that define an independent life. Alaskans living with limb loss, limb difference, or conditions requiring orthotic support deserve the same access to a full, active, and dignified life that able-bodied Alaskans take for granted. HB 272 is a meaningful step toward that reality, and I respectfully urge the Legislature to support it.

Respectfully,  
Alison Kahn, CPO  
Anchorage, Alaska

My name is Taylor Haines, and I am a below-knee amputee. I was born in Anchorage, Alaska in 1998. When I was born, my mother was counting my fingers and toes, as a mother does, when she found only 9 toes. After a series of tests, I was diagnosed with fibular hemimelia —an orthopedic disorder resulting in the complete absence of my fibula, anterior and posterior cruciate ligaments in the knee, and various foot/ankle bones. My parents were faced with the decision to fuse the bones I did have, which would require many leg lengthening surgeries and doctors visits as I grew, or amputation. The latter is ultimately what they chose, and I had my left leg amputation below the knee when I was 11 months old.

I am so grateful for what I'm sure was an incredibly hard decision, as it allowed me to grow up skiing, hiking, running and dancing along with other kiddos. However, the path to my prosthetic care that allowed me to do all those things was anything but simple. Each year, my parents had to submit insurance appeals after receiving denials to get me a new prosthesis —kids grow so much, I was either outgrowing my device in a matter of months, or I was breaking my componentry altogether. I can't tell you how many prosthetic feet my parents duct-taped together to get me through until another device was approved by our insurance. I was trying my hardest to keep up with my peers, but was consistently hindered by having only one prosthesis to do everything encompassed by our active lifestyle.

One prosthesis alone is not enough to replace what the human body can do. People with limb loss require multiple devices to restore their full function and live their lives to the fullest! I didn't get my first activity specific prosthesis until I was 21 years old —and I paid thousands of dollars out-of-pocket for it. My world has absolutely expanded by having multiple prosthetic devices for different activities. I have a leg I can use as a backup if my everyday leg needs maintenance. I have a leg I can wear into the water, for days cold plunging in Portage Lake or taking a swim in Big Lake. I have a leg for hiking the trails up Campbell Airstrip in the winter. Last year, I was able to run the London Marathon using my running blade prosthesis, and I am hoping to use it next year for the running portion of the Gold Nugget Triathlon!

The right device for each activity is different, and right now, Alaskans don't have access to all of them. We are not asking for anything that an able-bodied person does not take completely for granted. HB 272 would ensure that prosthetic users have the coverage they need to stay active and stay connected to their communities. I respectfully urge the Legislature to support HB 272 for all Alaskans living with limb loss and limb difference now, and for future generations to come. Thank you.

Taylor Haines

**From:** [Erin Page](#)  
**To:** [House Health and Social Services](#)  
**Subject:** Fw: Multiple Prosthesis (letter of support re: HB 272)  
**Date:** Monday, April 6, 2026 10:25:50 AM

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Hello, Katy--

Forwarding in case this didn't come to you directly. It's from Christopher Thompson, Seward, AK.

Thank you!

EP

**Erin Page**

Staff to Rep. Josephson

Interim: 206 679 4955 (cell)

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**From:** Ben Bohart <benbohart@hotmail.com>

**Sent:** Monday, April 6, 2026 9:09 AM

**To:** Erin Page <Erin.Page@akleg.gov>

**Subject:** Multiple Prosthesis

To Whom It May Concern,

My name is Christopher Thompson, I live in Seward Alaska, and I am currently 45 years old. Just over 20 years ago, when I was 25, I was involved in a devastating construction accident that ultimately resulted in the amputation of my left leg below the knee. I immediately began working with a prosthetist to get replacements made for parts that, try as we might, can't really be replaced. To lose a limb is terrible, to lose a limb as a young person was extremely difficult, and to lose a limb as a child takes a perseverance and grace that the vast majority of people on the planet do not possess and as such live their lives with little idea of how lucky they are to be "normal."

Before my accident and subsequent amputation; I was a construction worker, snowboarder, mountain biker, fisherman, and generally an active person living in Alaska. I was an excellent swimmer, and enjoyed the beach. After my accident and losing my foot, I not only had to learn to walk again, I had to learn to adapt my new body and limb to a host of activities. Snowboarding was difficult. Due to the type of amputation I had, I could not wear a locking liner and my leg would sometimes fall off. I had such a fear of it happening on a chair lift that I never returned to Alyeska, one of the most beautiful places on the planet that sat in my own backyard. I had a hard time riding my bike with my first prosthetic because the socket dug into the back of my knee causing painful welts and sores. I no longer enjoyed going to the beach or swimming because my footshell would fill with sand and my prosthetic foot would pop out and I could not keep a slipper on it. I couldn't bend my ankle anymore on my prosthetic so I

could no longer wear the boots that I loved.

After about a year of dealing with the challenges and general depression and the feeling that my life would forever be worse off, I started embracing the engineering and working with my prosthetist and modifying my feet. I learned that there were specific feet out there with sandal toes that I could use at the beach, I got different sockets made that made it easier to ride a bike. I got a split keel foot that allowed me to walk on uneven terrain without a cane. I even had a spare prosthetic which alleviated the absolutely crippling anxiety that one day mine would break and I would be stuck waiting weeks to be able to walk again.

The human body is pretty incredible in its natural state, because an organic limb is extremely adaptable, a human limb can transition from walking to running, to skiing, to riding a bike, to swimming to jumping with relative ease. Prosthetics however require some purpose building, much in the same way that you aren't going to drive a Ford Raptor in a Formula 1 race, or take an F1 car to the Baja 500. To provide another analogy; you can use a screwdriver for a hammer, but it will work horribly and introduce danger to the task that would be mitigated by having the right tool. In this same regard, prosthetic limbs are both tools and vehicles, tools that help people feel a little more like a fully complete human again, and vehicles for a life. Having the right tool kit is essential for an amputee to live their life with the same basic grace and dignity that 93% of the rest of the world gets to take for granted. Having multiple prosthetics with different purposes isn't a luxury for an amputee, it's a necessity, and in America, a country that embraces freedom and self determination, it should be a right.

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**Thank you,**

**Chris Thompson**



GOVERNOR'S COUNCIL ON DISABILITIES  
& SPECIAL EDUCATION  
Patrick Reinhart, Executive Director  
550 W 7th Ave Suite 1220  
Anchorage, Alaska 99501  
Main: 907.269.8990  
Toll Free: 1.888.269.8990  
Fax: 907.269.8995

March 19, 2026

Honorable Members of the Alaska State Legislature  
Alaska State Capitol  
Juneau, AK 99801

RE: SUPPORT FOR HB 272 - INSURANCE FOR PROSTHETICS & ORTHOTICS

Dear Members of the Alaska State Legislature,

On behalf of the Governor's Council on Disabilities and Special Education, I am writing to express strong support for House Bill 272. The Council thanks Representative Josephson for his dedication to this important issue and for introducing this legislation during the 34th Alaska State Legislature on January 23, 2026. HB 272 proposes important updates to Alaska's insurance coverage laws for prosthetic and orthotic devices that will help individuals with developmental disabilities and others obtain the equipment they need to live healthy, active, and independent lives.

The Governor's Council on Disabilities and Special Education (GCDSE or the Council) fulfills several federal and state roles, including serving as Alaska's State Council on Developmental Disabilities under the Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act. The Council works to improve the lives of Alaskans with developmental disabilities and promotes a system in which individuals can live meaningful lives in their communities, consistent with AS 47.80.095, the Developmental Disabilities Shared Vision Act. HB 272 supports this vision by addressing barriers that individuals with disabilities face in obtaining prosthetic and orthotic devices necessary for everyday living, work, recreation, and personal care.

### **Public Health Need**

- Approximately **6,500 Alaskans live with limb loss or limb difference.**
- Many face barriers to obtaining prosthetic or orthotic devices for **physical activity, water activities, and personal hygiene.**
- Barriers often include:
  - Insurance denials for devices labeled **"not medically necessary."**
  - **High out-of-pocket costs** ranging from **\$5,000 to more than \$50,000.**
- Without appropriate coverage, individuals and families may be forced to:
  - Pay prohibitive costs for necessary devices.
  - Risk **injury from using improper or worn devices.**

- Live **sedentary lifestyles**, increasing risk for long-term health complications such as obesity.
  - Struggle with **independent personal hygiene** due to lack of appropriate equipment.
- Standard prostheses are designed primarily for **walking and daily mobility** and may not be appropriate for:
  - Running or sports
  - Climbing or physically demanding work
  - Water use or bathing
- Many individuals therefore require **specialized prosthetic or orthotic devices** designed for specific activities.
- Children with disabilities are **4.5 times less likely to participate in physical activity** than children without disabilities.

### **How HB 272 Helps**

- HB 272 updates Alaska’s prosthetic and orthotic coverage law so that **health insurance plans must cover medically necessary prosthetic and orthotic devices**.
- The bill allows individuals to access **additional devices needed for physical activity or hygiene when medically necessary**.
- These updates will help ensure that individuals with limb loss or limb difference can:
  - Maintain **independence**
  - Participate in **work, recreation, and community life**
  - Access equipment needed for **health and personal care**

### **Fiscal and Social Impact**

Research shows that coverage for prosthetic and orthotic devices has **minimal impact on insurance premiums** while producing long-term health and economic benefits.

Key findings include:

- **Secondary joint problems** caused by improper prosthetic use can cost **\$80,000–\$150,000** over a patient’s lifetime.
- One study found that providing **Medicaid prosthetic coverage reduced healthcare costs by \$1,177.60 per patient**.
- The **estimated cost of physical inactivity** is approximately **\$2,500 per person per year**.
- Improper prosthetic use increases risk of **injury and hospitalization**, among the most expensive healthcare costs in Alaska.
- Individuals with disabilities who remain physically active are more likely to:
  - Maintain **employment**
  - Advance in their careers
  - Experience improved **physical and mental health**

### **Alaskans Who Would Benefit**

HB 272 will help ensure that Alaskans with limb loss or limb difference have **fair access to the prosthetic and orthotic devices necessary to participate fully in their communities.** Expanding coverage for medically necessary devices supports health equity, independence, and improved quality of life for individuals with disabilities across Alaska.

Thank you for your consideration of this important legislation and for your continued commitment to improving the lives of Alaskans with disabilities.

Sincerely,



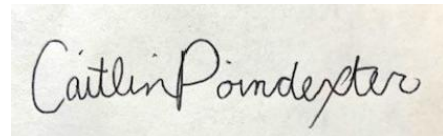
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Sabrina Richmond, GCSDE Chair



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Patrick Reinhart  
GCDSE Executive Director



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Caitlin Poindexter  
GCDSE Legislative Committee Co-Chair



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Art Delaune  
GCDSE Legislative Committee Co-Chair



February 19, 2026

Representative Andy Josephson  
Co-Chair  
House Finance Committee  
Alaska State Capitol  
Juneau, Alaska 99801

RE: APTA ALASKA SUPPORT FOR HB 272 - Activity-Specific Prostheses and Orthoses

Dear Members of the Alaska State Legislature,

On behalf of APTA Alaska, we write to express our strong support for HB 272, legislation aligned with the So Every Body Can Move Act, that would require coverage of medically necessary activity-specific prostheses and orthoses.

As licensed Physical Therapists and Physical Therapy Assistants, we are movement experts many of whom work daily with Alaskans living with limb loss and limb difference. Our role extends beyond helping patients achieve basic ambulation. We are responsible for restoring strength, balance, endurance, and safe participation in meaningful life activities. For many Alaskans, those activities include hiking, fishing, skiing, hunting, working on uneven terrain, and participating in community recreation. Standard prosthetic or orthotic devices function well for some daily activities, but are often not biomechanically designed to safely support these higher-demand activities.

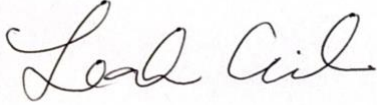
Without access to activity-specific devices, patients face increased risk of falls, overuse injuries, joint degeneration, chronic pain, and reduced physical activity. These limitations contribute to preventable secondary conditions such as cardiovascular disease, diabetes, obesity and depression – ultimately increasing long-term healthcare costs and decreasing their quality of life. From a clinical perspective, activity-specific prostheses and orthoses are not recreational items; they are medically necessary tools that enable safe movement, effective rehabilitation, and long-term health maintenance.

HB 272 represents a proactive investment in public health and functional independence. Ensuring coverage for medically appropriate devices improves outcomes, supports participation in work and community life, and advances health equity for Alaskans with limb loss and limb difference.

APTA Alaska respectfully encourages your support of HB 272. This legislation aligns with our profession's mission to optimize movement, enhance quality of life, and promote equitable access to care across our state.

Thank you for your consideration and your service to the people of Alaska.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Leah Einhorn". The signature is written in black ink on a light-colored background.

**Leah Einhorn, PT, DPT, OCS, FAAOMPT**  
President, APTA Alaska



UAA College of  
Arts and Sciences  
UNIVERSITY of ALASKA ANCHORAGE

March 14, 2026

House Health & Social Services Committee  
Alaska State Capitol, 120 4th Street Rm 3,  
Juneau, AK 99801-1182

**Re: Support for House Bill 272 – Prosthetic and Orthotic Coverage**

Dear Members of the House Health & Social Services Committee,

On behalf of the University of Alaska Anchorage Physical Therapist Assistant Program, the only physical therapy education program in the state of Alaska, I write in strong and heartfelt support of House Bill 272.

At UAA, we are not just teaching content. We are preparing future providers who will care for Alaskans in clinics, hospitals, and communities across this state. Our students are learning how to help people move again, return to work, care for their families, and regain a sense of independence after injury, illness, or limb loss.

What they quickly come to understand is that healing is not just about what happens in the clinic. It is about access.

I have watched students work with individuals who are motivated, resilient, and doing everything they can to recover, yet they are limited not by their effort, but by whether they can access the prosthetic or orthotic devices they need. These are not optional tools. They are essential for basic movement, safety, and dignity.

These moments stay with our students. They begin to realize that being a good clinician is not only about skill and knowledge. It is also about advocating for the person in front of them and recognizing the barriers that exist beyond their control.

House Bill 272 matters because it directly addresses one of those barriers. It helps ensure that medically necessary prosthetic and orthotic devices are accessible, allowing patients to



UAA College of  
Arts and Sciences  
UNIVERSITY of ALASKA ANCHORAGE

fully participate in their care and in their lives. It aligns the care we are teaching with the care that should be possible.

As educators, we carry a responsibility not only to our students, but to the communities they will serve. We want to graduate clinicians who are prepared, compassionate, and able to make a real difference. That becomes much harder when the patients they work with cannot access the very tools needed for progress.

This bill supports our students' ability to provide meaningful care. More importantly, it supports Alaskans in maintaining independence, mobility, and quality of life.

We respectfully and strongly urge your support in passing House Bill 272. This is about more than coverage. It is about people, possibility, and the kind of healthcare system we want to build in Alaska.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Lindsey Marsaw'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial 'L'.

Lindsey Marsaw, ACCE, CSCS  
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Physical Therapist Assistant Program  
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