



January 30, 2018

**SB 582: Determination of a Qualifying Condition by Physical Therapists for Disability Parking Placards  
SUPPORT**

Thank you Chairperson Cole and members of the House Transportation and Infrastructure committee for providing me with this opportunity to speak about SB 582, which provides physical therapists the ability to approve the need for disability parking placards for individuals who have one or more qualifying conditions.

My name Susan Ann Talley. I am a physical therapist with over 30 years of experience. I am the Associate Director for Professional Education and faculty member in the Doctor of Physical Therapy degree program at the University of Michigan – Flint. I am also the chair of the Michigan Physical Therapy Association (MPTA) Legislative Committee and past-President.

Physical therapists earn the Doctor of Physical Therapy degree after 4 years of undergraduate and 3 -4 years of graduate education, which includes 36 weeks of clinical internships. There are 6 DPT programs in Michigan. Admission to physical therapy programs is highly competitive.

On behalf of the MPTA, I respectfully request you to support this bill, introduced by Senator Knollenberg with bi-partisan co-sponsorship. Michigan law currently allows specific health professionals to approve the need for disability parking placards for individuals who have one or more qualifying conditions which makes it difficult to walk for long distances. Included in the statute are Medical Doctors, Doctors of Osteopathy, nurse practitioners, chiropractors, physician assistants, and optometrists. Physical therapists are not currently included in the list.

Physical therapists work with individuals with mobility limitations and restrictions every day. One of the fundamental underpinnings of a physical therapist's education and experience is to identify problems that limit a person's ability to get around in the community. Physical therapists work in a wide variety of health care settings where they have contact with patients with mobility limitations, including outpatient clinics, hospitals, rehabilitation facilities, and in patient's private homes.

Current law identifies 7 eligibility standards which qualify an individual for a disability parking permit, many of which physical therapists are qualified to identify, including:

- An inability to walk more than 200 feet without having to stop and rest
- Patient must use a wheelchair, walker, crutch, brace, or other ambulatory aid to walk
- Patient has a cardiovascular condition measuring 3 or 4 on the *New York Heart Classification Scale*, or which renders the patient incapable of meeting a minimum standard for cardiovascular health established by the American Heart Association and approved by the Michigan Department of Public Health
- Patient has an arthritic, neurological, or orthopedic condition that severely limits the ability to walk
- Patient has a persistent reliance on an oxygen source other than ordinary air



Physical therapists are an ideal front-line health professional to address the need for disability parking placards for individuals with one of these conditions as many are already under the care of a physical therapist.

SB 582 would amend the Motor Vehicle Code to add physical therapists to the list of individuals who are able to authorize/approve the need for disability parking placards. SB 582 helps to meet the needs of Michigan residents with mobility limitation to have more efficient access to individuals who can determine qualifying conditions by adding physical therapists to those already identified in statute

Physical therapists are highly educated and trained to identify the mobility limitations necessitating the need for a disability parking placard. SB 582 increases access for Michigan citizens to obtain a disability parking placard, when qualified, to help maintain their ability to be more mobile in their community. On behalf of the Michigan Physical Therapy Association I respectfully ask for your support.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Susan Ann Talley". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, flowing "S" at the beginning.

Susan Ann Talley, PT, DPT  
Chair, Legislative Committee  
Michigan Physical Therapy Association