

TESTIMONY OF THOMAS BEEN

ON BEHALF OF THE PENNSYLVANIA ORTHOTICS AND PROSTHETICS SOCIETY (POPS)

BEFORE THE HOUSE PROFESSIONAL LICENSURE COMMITTEE REGARDING HB 2015 AND THE NEED FOR LICENSURE OF THE O & P PROFESSION

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 19, 2008
418 Main Capitol Building

Good morning Chairman Sturla and members of the committee. Thank you for the opportunity to present testimony regarding House Bill 2015. My name is Thomas Been, and I am the owner of Central Orthotic and Prosthetic Incorporated located in Johnstown. I have been doing orthotic and prosthetic treatments for over 32 years. Between my four offices, we manage about 30 patients a day on average. With my manufacturing lab at my Johnstown location we are able to manufacture custom items in as little as 5 to 8 hours depending on what is needed. The areas in which my office cover are rural, which means quite a few of my patients are farmers, miners, or steel mill workers. My company also has a VA contract. We attend a VA clinic every other Friday at the VA Hospital in Altoona. We also see about seven veterans a week between all four offices. The reason I am here today to present testimony to this committee is because of my strong belief in the need for licensure for the professions of orthotics, prosthetics, and pedorthics and also to pledge my support for House Bill 2015.

Mr. Chairman and members of this committee, I have seen many changes over my 32 years of work. The advancement of components over this time in both orthotics and prosthetics has been dramatic. When I started in 1972, most orthotic components were handmade. Before the advancement in technology, prefabricated components were more readily used, which made it unnecessary to purchase prefabricated joints. However, these parts have now become more complicated, thus requiring more knowledge and skill level.

Prosthetics have changed also. Older prosthetics usually consisted on wood components with steel knee construction. These prosthesis usually weighed about 15 pounds. With the advancement of endo-skeletal components and the advancement in technology, the prosthesis can now be a lot lighter in weight. But with the advancement in technology these devices have become a lot more complicated, requiring a more precise fitting.

Now Mr. Chairman and members of this committee, the reasons I have given you information in regards to the components of a prosthesis and detailed the advancement of prosthetics and orthotics is because of my strong belief in the need for licensure. The reasons I feel we should have state licensure and thus the passage of HB 2015 start with the fact that orthotics and prosthetics fall under DME - Durable Medical Equipment. As

it stands now, Mr. Chairman, anyone in Pennsylvania can engage in the profession of prosthetics and orthotics without any set of guidelines or proper rules for evaluation and measurements of qualification. It is not right, in my opinion, for the people of Pennsylvania and the citizens in your districts to be subjected to receive inadequate care or sold a device without proper fitting.

Without any state law to protect patients from going to someone inadequately trained, fraud and abuse could become rampant and widespread. Simply put Mr. Chairman, orthotics and prosthetics have evolved in Pennsylvania to warrant licensure. We need state licensure so we would have required guidelines to be able to treat patients for orthotic and prosthetic services in your districts. **With the passage of House Bill 2015, patients will receive proper evaluations and be fit with the proper orthotic or prosthetic components needed to enable them to ambulate, work, and go about with daily activities.**

Now Mr. Chairman and members of this committee, this story could happen to any amputee in your district -whether they are soldiers returning from Iraq and Afghanistan or simply members of society. It is my belief that these Pennsylvanians need not only quality care but also the assurance that the people they entrust their prosthetics care to are qualified and prepared to deal with any situation that may occur. The only way to ensure that is to ensure that those delivering care are appropriately trained, certified, and licensed. **Mr. Chairman, this is most importantly a quality of care issue.** We owe it to our patients to make sure they are active members of this state and protected from the medical fraud that is all too prevalent. This is why we need to pass House Bill 2015 and create licensure for the professions of orthotics, prosthetics, and pedorthics. In conclusion, I thank you Mr. Chairman and members of this committee for allowing me the opportunity to address you today.