Hello, my name is \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and I am a **Physical Therapist Assistant Student (SPTA)** at \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. I am writing about a very important issue – improving Alabamians’ access to healthcare and treatment. Currently, Alabama has one of the most restrictive statutes when it comes to the practice of physical therapy and patients’ access to Physical Therapists. Only two other states have similar restrictions, meaning 47 other states better understand the value that physical therapy brings to people and the healthcare delivery system. Furthermore, I am very concerned that by practicing in a state with such restrictions, my education and training will be underutilized vs. practicing in a more progressive healthcare state.

That is why I am contacting you today: to ask you to support legislation that improves health care delivery in Alabama by allowing full direct access to Physical Therapist services. Currently, Physical Therapists in Alabama can perform an evaluation, and in some limited cases, evaluate and treat patients without a referral. However, in most cases, a referral from a doctor, a dentist, licensed chiropractor, a licensed physician’s assistant or a licensed certified registered nurse practitioner is required in order to fully access the services of a Physical Therapist. This imposes on the consumer, inconvenience (an extra office visit), additional costs (paying for that visit) and an unnecessary layer of red tape.

Bills will be introduced in the House and the Senate in 2020 proposing full Direct Access to physical therapy services. The bills will not seek to expand the scope of services that a Physical Therapist may perform. The bills only improve patient access to those services. If during an initial evaluation a Physical Therapist deems a patient is not appropriate for treatment, then no further services will be performed, and the patient will be referred to the proper medical professional.

There are many reasons to support this legislation, but some of the primary ones are as follows:

* Direct access to a Physical Therapist is **effective**. Early access prevents delay in care, is less costly and has improved outcomes.
* Direct Access to a Physical Therapist is **safe**, with no increase of malpractice or incidence of claims in states where direct access is legal.
* Direct Access to a Physical Therapist and physical therapy services is one of the most **effective alternative services to the use of opioids**, both physically and financially.
* Direct Access to a Physical Therapist **gives the Alabama consumer greater control and access to quality, effective care.**

Thank you for considering this important legislation that will achieve one of the most important goals of government: improving the lives of everyday people. I hope that you support this endeavor and that I can count on your **“yes” vote in 2020.**

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**Signature Date**

