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In the state of Texas, the debate is upon us once again. HB 1263 - Patient Access To Physical Therapy - is to be heard in the House Public Health Committee on April 7, 2015.</p>

<p>It is time to push aside the fear-driven dialogue and logical fallacies that have clouded this issue for two decades.</p>

<p>Here are just a few reasons why this bill is so important to the health - and liberties - of all Texans.</p>

<p>1. Freedom of choice: A patient should have the civil liberty and the freedom to make decisions related to their health care - based on their own volition and free will.</p>

<p>Last I looked, the Declaration Of Independence defines ♦unalienable rights♦ as ♦life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness♦.</p>

<p>Health - and choice - are implicit to those rights and freedoms.</p>

<p>2. Who better to decide if a patient is appropriate for physical therapy than a physical therapist? As it stands right now, a patient requires a referral from a physician, chiropractor, or even a dentist, for treatment. None of these referral providers have any training in physical therapy.</p>

<p>Doesn♦t that make it difficult knowing when it is ♦appropriate♦ or not? </p>

<p>3. Patient-centered care, Part I:

Patient-centered care requires patients having the ability - and ownership - to make choices related to their care.</p>

<p>In 2013, the PEW Research Center found that 59% of US adults have looked online for health information in the past year, with 35% of US adults having used the Internet to self-diagnose a medical condition they have. Guess what? A total of 41% of ♦online diagnosers♦ had their condition confirmed by a clinician!</p>

<p>We don♦t seem to be too concerned about safety issues with patients seeking self-diagnosis online - and you certainly don♦t need a referral to use the Internet.</p>

<p>4.

Patient-centered care, Part II: You don♦t need a referral to be seen by any number of licensed and/or unlicensed practitioners. Throw hot stones on the patient, poke them with needles, wave a crystal over their forehead, no worries ♦ </p>

<p>♦ but by golly, don♦t let them be treated by a physical therapist, the experts in movement, exercise and function [insert sarcasm here].</p>

<p>5. Costs and the market: A free market forces all providers to bring their best skills and outcomes to the table for the benefit of the patient. Competition is always good.</p>

<p>The payers, be they the insurance providers or patients directly, will all benefit from better outcomes, more efficient use of health care resources, and ultimately, lower costs.</p>

<p>We♦re not in the year 1950 anymore. The health care landscape is changing. The burden of proof isn♦t on why patients should have access - the data to support this continues to grow on a daily basis, and has for two decades.</p>

<p>The burden of proof is on those who say that patients shouldn♦t have access. Please tell me how it can be acceptable, in this day and age, for patients to have their civil liberties limited in a state that prides itself on the same? And, while we♦re at it ♦ where♦s your data? </p>

<p>Let♦s move into the year 2015. Over 10,000 Texans agree, having signed a petition in support of HB 1263. </p>

<p>The public hearing is to be held on Tuesday, April 7. Stop by the Capitol and drop a card of support via the House Witness Registration kiosks, preferably before the hearing begins at 8:00 am. </p>

<p>Demand that the Texas Legislature give Texans the right to choose.</p>

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