

# American Hippotherapy Association, Inc.

*"Treatment with the Help of the Horse"*

April 29<sup>th</sup>, 2013

The Honorable Dr. Michael C. Burgess  
Attn: Sarah Johnson  
2336 Rayburn House Office Building  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515



*"Treatment with the Help of the Horse"*

Dear Representative Burgess:

The American Hippotherapy Association, Inc. (AHA, Inc.) would like to commend you on your knowledge of and support of the movement of the horse as a treatment strategy when incorporated into a patient's overall plan of care by licensed medical professionals such as physical therapists. We are aware of the current legislation you have drafted, Bill HR1705, and wanted to share with you some of our educational materials to insure you have the most current industry research and terminology behind you.

We have included with this letter: the AHA, Inc. Research Bibliography, AHA, Inc.'s White Paper on "The Present Use of Equine Movement by PT, OT and SLP's in the United States", AHA, Inc.'s Terminology, and letters of endorsement from both APTA (American Physical Therapy Association) and AOTA (American Occupational Therapy Association).

We plan to share updates as to the progress of this bill with our members as it may affect many of them. Over 46% of our members are physical therapists; however the number of occupational therapists (38%) and speech language pathologists (16%) using equine movement as a treatment technique as part of their treatment plan is growing. When a licensed therapist is incorporating equine movement into their patient's plan per APTA, "the services rendered by that physical therapist, in such content, should be recognized as physical therapy interventions and the specific treatment strategy, device, equipment or adjunct used to deliver these interventions." Thus, in our opinion, as stated in your proposed bill it should be paid for as any other physical therapy service. However, we'd encourage you to expand this bill to cover occupational therapists and speech language pathologist to recognize their use of equine movement as a treatment technique as well.

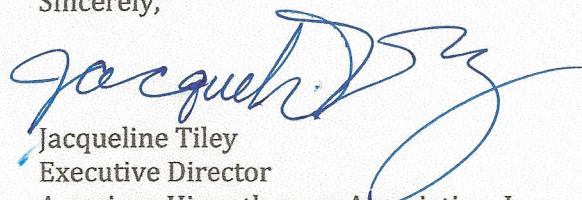
As the national organization representing PT, OT and SLP's who utilize equine movement, AHA Inc.'s mission is to educate therapists and therapist assistants who want to, or do utilize, equine movement as another treatment technique for reaching rehabilitation goals for their patients. Additionally we strive to educate their team members, as well as current and potential patients and their families. Part of this education is to understand the difference between a medical service and a recreational/leisure activity adapted for persons with disabilities and who can legally provide which service. As therapists we recognize the benefits of recreational activities to improve overall health, thus we partner with the Professional Association of Therapeutic



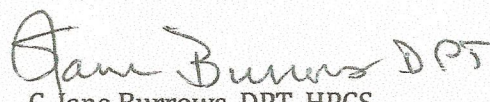
Horsemanship (PATH) International, who's membership consists primarily of riding instructors, to be sure that the industry Standards for Therapists utilizing equine movement (Hippotherapy) are current. PATH Intl. also houses standards for provision of adaptive (therapeutic) horseback riding, driving, vaulting and ground lessons. Therapists and riding instructors complement each other in our respective areas of expertise. When a consult is needed regarding a medical condition or a PATH International Precaution and Contraindication it is in the best interest of the instructor to bring in a therapist. Likewise, when a therapist has a patient they are ready to discharge from rehabilitation services they should consult with a trained and certified adaptive (therapeutic) riding instructor to find the program best suited to the participant's needs if they are now able to move to an adaptive activity versus a medical therapy.

We hope the information we have provided is beneficial to you for the passage of this legislation. If we can answer any questions you may have or be of further assistance, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Sincerely,



Jacqueline Tiley  
Executive Director  
American Hippotherapy Association, Inc.  
Phone #: 970.980.9674  
E-mail: [ahaexecutivedirector@gmail.com](mailto:ahaexecutivedirector@gmail.com)



C. Jane Burrows, DPT, HPCS  
President  
American Hippotherapy Association, Inc.  
Phone #: 305.342.2418  
E-mail: [janeburrows@comcast.net](mailto:janeburrows@comcast.net)