



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

September 12, 2017

As physician and orthopedic surgeon, I was impressed by the unique and professional experience that Healing Reins provided during my visit to learn more about Hippotherapy. While on my tour of Healing Rein's facility, it quickly became apparent that they put a great deal of time and effort into maintaining a high-quality space for physical therapy, therapeutic riding and mental healthcare. Their facility provides ample space and resources for a variety of treatment methods, enabling them to tailor a specific therapy plan to every individual who chooses to use Healing Reins' services.

When it came time for me to get on a horse, it was immediately noticeable that the movements of the horse were similar in many ways to those of a human; and could prove to be very helpful in rehabilitating people who may have trouble walking or standing upright. Some of the most obvious physical improvements stemming from Hippotherapy include:

- Postural symmetry and stability
- Body awareness
- Trunk core strength
- Joint mobility endurance
- Muscle strength
- Timing and coordination of motor strategies

One method Healing Reins employed that I found to be very effective was to have the rider perform activities (like using a ball to play catch with an attending assistant) while riding the horse. This makes riding more subconscious and allows the body to learn the motions to the point that they become second-nature. The use of a horse in physical therapy provides a range of movements and motions that would be nearly impossible to replicate with the types of machines used by traditional physical therapy practices, which is one reason why this is a viable alternative to more traditional PT.

I would like to conclude by saying that Healing Reins is a very important resource for the Central Oregon community. The programs that Healing Reins offers allow for some of the most vulnerable members of the population to have multiple options when it comes to choosing the treatment that is best for them. It was a real privilege to visit Healing Reins, meet their wonderful staff and see first-hand the important work they do for the people of Central Oregon.

Sincerely,

Knute Buehler

State Representative

House District 54