



American Physical Therapy AssociationSM

APTA's Public Policy Priorities, 2019-2020

Physical Therapy is an Essential Component for Success

- Population Health
- Patient Choice and Access
- Value Based Care and Practice
- Research and Innovation

Population Health

APTA urges Congress to enact policies that empower people to live healthy and independent lives. To this end, APTA will advocate with federal policymakers and collaborate with stakeholders to:

- Guarantee access to essential health benefits for all America with no arbitrary limits placed on people with pre-existing conditions;
- Support programs that increase physical activity and exercise among individuals of all ages;
- Support funding for prevention and wellness services, including falls prevention initiatives, in public and commercial insurance programs;
- Support funding for public health initiatives that increase health literacy;
- Increase funding for the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act state grant programs so eligible children with special needs get the supports they need to learn and grow;
- Preserve and protect services provided via Medicaid;
- Advance efforts to create and sustain healthy communities and promote the use of active transportation; and
- Advance policies to increase knowledge of primary care services providers about nonpharmacologic interventions for individuals of all ages who live with pain.

Patient Choice and Access

APTA urges Congress and the Administration to improve patient outcomes by eliminating barriers to health care services. To this end, APTA will advocate with federal policymakers and collaborate with stakeholders to:

- Expand the definition of primary care services providers to include physical therapists;
- Expand opportunities in public programs for direct access to physical therapy services;
- Expand coverage and payment for rehabilitation services delivered via digital health and telehealth;
- Eliminate or reduce out of pocket costs for nonpharmacological services;
- Increase the health provider workforce in rural and medically-underserved areas by adding physical therapists to federal student loan repayment programs;
- Secure regulations to implement the National Defense Authorization Act 2017's policy that established physical therapist assistants (PTAs) as an authorized TRICARE provider;
- Advance policies to ameliorate the payment differential for physical therapist assistants to ensure access to essential services;
- Increase transparency to patients regarding costs of health care services and conflicts of interests in the delivery of health care services; and
- Advance policies to ensure financial incentives for patients, providers, and payers align and incorporate the true costs of appropriate services necessary for patients to achieve their desired outcomes.

Value Based Care and Practice

APTA urges Congress and the Administration to improve patient outcomes by supporting efforts to increase efficiencies in the delivery of health services that reduce administrative burdens to providers and ensure transparency to patients. To this end, APTA will advocate with federal policymakers and collaborate with stakeholders to:

- Support demonstration projects to validate alternative payment models in public and commercial insurance that increase administrative efficiency, effective patient outcomes, and collaboration among health care providers including physical therapists;
- Advance policies that reduce administration burden in Medicare, Medicare Advantage, and commercial insurance; and
- Enact legislation to allow physical therapists to opt out of Medicare and privately contract with Medicare beneficiaries.

Note: The term 'Administrative Burden' is intended to encompass issues related to utilization management.

Research & Innovation

APTA urges Congress and the Administration to prioritize research and clinical innovation to increase access to appropriate value based health care services. To this end, APTA will advocate with federal policymakers and collaborate with stakeholders to:

- Increase funding for rehabilitation research across federal agencies including the National Institutes of Health, the Department of Defense, the Department of Education, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention;
- Ensure parity for the physical therapy profession with physicians and hospitals regarding the use, certification, and interoperability of electronic health records; and
- Support utilization of the Physical Therapy Outcomes Registry in both public and commercial payment programs to drive the delivery of quality, effective and efficient rehabilitation services.

TRANSFORMATION

MOVEMENT

**BETTER
TOGETHER**