

APTA Releases New Report on Direct Access to Physical Therapist Services



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ALEXANDRIA, Va. — The American Physical Therapy Association announces the release of the “[State of Direct Access to Physical Therapist Services](#),” a comprehensive resource designed to expand patient access to physical therapist services.

This report follows years of advocacy by APTA and the physical therapy profession to eliminate the outdated referral requirement in state physical therapy licensure laws needed to access a physical therapist. Direct access to physical therapist evaluation and treatment is now allowed in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and the U.S. Virgin Islands. However, significant challenges remain, including inconsistent state-level provisions tied to treatment absent a referral, payer policies requiring referrals or prior authorization for payment, and increasing consumer awareness about direct access to empower patients when they need therapy services.

“Direct access to physical therapist services is well established as safe, effective, and essential to high-quality care,” says APTA President Kyle Covington, PT, DPT, PhD. “This report reinforces that fact with further evidence and provides a roadmap for continued progress. APTA calls on payers, regulators, and policymakers to remove the outdated and unnecessary barriers that still limit patient access to physical therapist services.”

The report includes:

- A concise history and current overview of direct access to PT services across the U.S.
- Strategic insights for use by policymakers, employers, and payers to improve patient access and decrease health care costs.
- Summarized evidence that demonstrates the value of direct access to patients and the health care system.

“This is more than a report — it’s a tool for action,” Covington says. “We want policymakers and payers to use it to open doors, challenge outdated policies, and ensure patients get the care they need — when and where they need it.”

Visit [APTA’s Direct Access Advocacy](#) page for more information or to access the full report.

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About APTA

The American Physical Therapy Association represents more than 100,000 physical therapists, physical therapist assistants, and physical therapy students nationwide. Visit apta.org to learn more.