

NYPTA Western District Newsletter

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Inside This Issue:

- 2008 District Meetings
- Short Form FCE's - A Cost Effective Alternative
- PTA Corner - Let's hear from you!
- No Referrals Needed for IHA
- Medicare PQRI Bonus
- Evidence Based Practice: Is Ultrasound Effective for Shoulder Pain?
- 2008 Legislative Plans
- What's Happening at the National Level
- NATA sues APTA
- Upcoming Seminars



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WNYPTA 2008 District Meetings

The Executive Board for the Western District resumed meeting after a hiatus through the holidays. Of particular note, Spring meetings have been scheduled as follows:

Tuesday March 18th, 5:30-7:00 PM
Kimball Tower 111, University at Buffalo

Tuesday April 22nd, 5:30-7:00 PM
Location to be determined

Each meeting will be comprised of a 30 minute Business Meeting including Board Reports and Discussion of local, state and national issues, followed by a 30-45 minutes guest presentation.

The March presentation, titled "Is Our Profession in Jeopardy? A Multi-Specialty Panel Discussion on Current Issues Affecting PTs" will include Susan Bennett, PT, EdD, NCS and Ronald White, PT, MS, OCS, moderated by

Corey Simon, P.T., D.P.T. Topics to be discussed include POPTS, Effects of HMO coverage on patient care, Continuing Education, Direct Access and Practice Infringement.

In addition, the District will address upcoming participation in a number of activities, including "Good For the Neighborhood", Buffalo Kids' Day and Lobby Day.

Lastly, the District is looking for a full slate of representatives for the upcoming Delegate Assembly in Albany. This is scheduled for May 2nd and 3rd. Western District is allowed 11 PT and 1 PTA delegates. This is a great opportunity to get involved in the decision making that will shape the future of Physical Therapy in New York.

Further announcements will be sent via email as reminders and confirmations of upcoming meetings.

NYPTA 2008 Legislative Plan

While achieving Direct Access was a major accomplishment. The Legislative Plan for 2008 addresses ongoing issues for the practice of Physical Therapy. Two insurance bills were carried over from last year.

The first bill, S.5219 and A.8934 address the abusive practices of managed care companies. These bills attempt promote fair and appropriate utilization practices, consistent with the Managed Care Reform Act of 1996.

In addition, a second bill, S.5209 and A.7779, addresses the need for revision of the reimbursement within the Workers' Compensation arena. In part, this bill would require annual review of the fee schedule. In addition, it would make Compensation Law consistent with Education Law, thereby removing the requirement for physician referral.

Another bill that has prompted discussion is the proposal for mandated continuing education prior to re-registration. This is being developed in a manner consistent with other professionals.

Copies of these bills made be obtained from the Assembly (www.assembly.state.ny.us) or the Senate (www.senate.state.ny.us).

Please remember that Lobby day is April 15th this year. You may register on the NYPTA website (nypta.org) or contact our Western District Legislative Liaison, Amy Kauderer, PT, DPT (alkauderer@dpt@verizon.net).

Western District

New York Physical
Therapy Association

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**“Looking Toward
the Future,
Never Forgetting
the Past”**

Evidence Based Practice: A Summary Review

Evaluation of a short-form functional capacity evaluation: less may be best. *Gross DP, Battié MC, Asante AK, J Occup Rehabil. 2007 Sep;17(3):422-35.*

Functional Capacity Evaluations (FCE's) have been utilized for many years as a means for determining the return to work capabilities of an injured worker. These exams come in many forms, with a number of packaged programs, as well as hybrid version, being developed. New York State adopted guidelines several years ago for the provision of FCE's.

Traditional FCE's have been considered burdensome with regards to time and cost. In response, short-form FCE's have been established over the past several years.

This recent article summarizes the evaluation of the effectiveness of a short-form FCE. A group of 23 clinicians, trained in traditional FCE methodology were randomly

assigned to control or intervention groups. The intervention group were further trained in the application of the short form, while the control group continued with traditional methods.

When comparing outcomes, both groups were observed to have similar recovery outcomes, while the short form FCE's were noted to have a 43% reduction in functional assessment time. No statistically significant or clinically relevant differences were observed in comparison of outcomes.

Based upon these findings, it was suggested that clinicians may find the short-form to be a cost-effective alternative for return-to-work determinations.

No Referrals Needed for Independent Health in 2008

The February issue of “SCOPE”, the newsletter published and distributed by Independent Health, cites a policy revision, retroactive to January 1, 2008.

The article indicated that last Fall, IHA informed physicians they had filed plans with the New York State Department of Insurance to remove the referral requirement for specialty services on a number of HMO and POS products. This application was approved by both the Department of health and Department of Insurance, effective January 1, 2008.

Based upon this change, Encompass HMO, Encompass Plus, Flexfit, Flexfit Select, Healthy NY, Healthy NY Select, Encompass 12 and Encompass 12 Plus

no longer require referrals. Since Physical Therapists are classified as a “Specialty Service”, this change in policy should be expected to include our services.

This may be confirmed by contacting your Provider Representative.

In order to comply with the Coordination of Care policy, a timely exchange of pertinent medical information must occur within 30 calendar days of the initial assessment, or once a year if the member has been seen on an ongoing basis 12 months or greater, and if the member has had significant changes in clinical presentation or treatment.

2008 Delgate Assembly Information

It is time to prepare for the 2008 Delgate Assembly Meeting of the NYPTA. This meeting, held every year in Albany, is the largest gathering of NYPTA membership for the determination of policy.

At this event, Chapter Officers are elected, and Chapter/Association motions are discussed and debated. Each District is allocated a specific number of seats, based upon the number of members within the District. Western District is allowed 11 PT's (10 plus the Chief) and 1 PTA.

In order to be properly prepared, delegates are forwarded a packet of material approximately two weeks prior to the meeting. This material is to be reviewed, and discussed within the District. Comments and concerns may then be presented at the Assembly.

This year's gathering is scheduled for May 2nd and 3rd, and will be held at The Century House, 977 New Loudon Road, Route 9, Latham New York.

Hotel rooms are being held for NYPTA until March 28th, therefore early registration is encouraged.

It is the hope of Western District that we can be well represented by utilizing all of our allocated spots. If you are interested in becoming involved in the decision making process of Western District, NYPTA and APTA, this is the time. Issues will be discussed at the March and April Western District meetings.

For more information, contact members of the Executive Board or go to the State website, www.nypta.org.

PT is Cost Effective Option for Treatment of Back Pain

In contrast to a recent study published in the Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA) suggesting that spine-related expenditures have increased without evidence of improvement, best evidence suggests that patients who receive physical therapy for musculoskeletal disorders, including back and neck pain, report good outcomes at a lower cost than using drugs or surgery.

For pain of a "mechanical" origin such as back or neck pain, hands-on therapy to mobilize the spine, and exercises designed to alleviate low back pain, have been shown to be particularly effective. Studies also have shown that patients with lumbar spinal stenosis can benefit from physical therapy, particularly when manual physical therapy, exercise, and a progressive body-weight-supported treadmill walking program is used.

"Consumers need to know that physical therapist management is a low-cost, high-value alternative to drugs and surgery to deal with musculoskeletal pain," said APTA President R Scott Ward, PT, PhD. "Because patients with chronic, disabling low back pain account for a disproportionate share of health care expenditures and workers' compensation costs, the potential cost savings of an early, effective intervention to prevent individuals from progressing to chronic disability may be considerable."

President Approves Legislation

Medicare patients received relief from arbitrary caps on rehabilitation services under legislation signed on Saturday, December 29 by President Bush. The American Physical Therapy Association (APTA) applauded the president and Congress for postponing inflexible financial limits - therapy caps without exceptions - on rehabilitation services and for reversing Medicare cuts for health professionals that were slated to begin on January 1. The Medicare, Medicaid, and SCHIP Extension Act of 2007 (S 2499), through June 30, 2008, extends the current therapy cap exceptions process and provides a 0.5% Medicare pay raise in place of a 10% cut.

APTA Responds to Lawsuit by NATA

The National Athletic Trainers' Association (NATA) on February 1, 2008, filed a lawsuit against APTA and the Orthopaedic Section, APTA, Inc. in the U.S. District Court in Dallas. The complaint alleges that the APTA and the Section have violated the antitrust laws by seeking to deny athletic trainers (ATCs) access to the market for manual therapy and by coercing physical therapists to refrain from educating ATCs in certain techniques. APTA's counsel is currently reviewing the complaint. APTA believes that the NATA lawsuit is wholly without merit.

***The above information was reprinted from the APTA web site.*

Physician Quality Reporting Initiative (PQRI) in 2008

Beginning January of 2008, Physical Therapists who submit claims to Medicare electronically, or using 1500 format, may be eligible for a 1.5% bonus.

Physical Therapists have 8 measures which they may elect to use when submitting claims for initial evaluations. If a clinician achieves a minimum of 80% compliance, on at least three of the eight measures, they are eligible for a year-end bonus equal to 1.5% of their paid claims.

Measures include Falls Risk Assessment, Medication Documentation and Verification, Neuro Assessment and Foot Wear Evaluation for Diabetes, Use of Electronic Medical Records System, Pain Assessment, Verification of Patient Involvement in Plan of Care and Body Weight (BMI) with Follow-up Recommendations.

The APTA recently offered a 2 hour audio-conference introducing these concepts and describing various ways to incorporate these measures into your daily operations.



While this program is currently voluntary participation, some providers expect to see it adopted in the future.

During the audi-conference, specific information regarding proper coding for measures were discussed. In addition, several strategies to include compliance were discussed. These included recommendations to start as soon as possible and strive for 4-5 measures per patient in order to improve compliance percentage.

For more information on this program, review the APTA and CMS website. Specific instructional documents and data worksheets are available.



Western District

New York Physical Therapy Association

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PT Assistants Corner

Recent discussions with one PTA in the region has raised the issue of the difficulties created by the DPT for PTA's who wish to advance to a career as a licensed PT. It is no longer as direct to make that transition. What are your thoughts on this issue?

You can contact me via e-mail at T.Napoleon2@verizon.net.

Mailing Label Here

Calendar/Points of Interest:

March 18th, 2008 - Western District Meeting

April 15th, 2008 - Lobby Day

April 22nd, 2008 - Western District Meeting

May 1-2, 2008 - NYPTA Board Meeting, Albany, NY

May 2-3, 2008 - Delegate Assembly

June 9-11 - House of Delegates

October 17-18 - NYPTA Board Meeting, Albany, NY

For calendar updates, visit www.nypta.org

Reimbursement Director Search

The search continues to fill the recently vacated position of reimbursement Director. Currently, members of the Executive Board at NYPTA, in conjunction with select members of the Reimbursement Panel, are completing final interviews with the hopes that the position will be filled shortly.

In the meantime, the reimbursement page has been updated to make it easier for membership to find the Problem Payer Form, FAQ;s and other reimbursement specific information.

While many members verbalize their complaints, it is imperative that we document our problems by using the Problem Payer form. This will allow us to quantify the issues and give us more credible data when complaints are voiced. Please take the time to review this page of the NYPTA website.

Upcoming Educational Seminars

Examination & Selected Interventions of the Shoulder

Course Developers/Faculty: George J. Davies, PT, DPT, MED, SCS, ATC, LAT, CSCS, FAPTA

July 26-27, 2008 - Brooklyn, NY (Long Island University)

Health Promotion and Wellness: Expanding Your Practice Paradigm

Course Developers/Faculty: Janet R. Bezner, PT, PhD, Beth Black, PT, MS, MarySue Ingman, PT, MS

April 5-6, 2008 - Brooklyn, NY (Long Island University)