

## Michael Shoemaker

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**From:** Michael Shoemaker  
**Sent:** Saturday, August 24, 2019 08:39  
**To:** 'Stewart, Phyllis'; Keshishian, Marc D., MD  
**Cc:** 'Janis Kemper'; Barbara Herzog (bherzog58@gmail.com)  
**Subject:** Follow-Up on PT Direct Access Issue  
**Attachments:** 2016 Frogner.pdf; 2016 Riley.pdf; 2017 APTQI Overview.pdf; 2017 APTQI Part 1.pdf; 2017 APTQI Part 2.pdf; 2018 Denninger.pdf; 2018 Frogner.pdf; 2018 Horn.pdf; 2018 Sun early PT less opioids.pdf; 2019 Mabry Military Study.pdf; 1997 Mitchell.pdf; 2012 Pendergast.pdf; 2014 Badke.pdf; 2014 Ojha.pdf; 2018 Liu.pdf

Dear Ms. Stewart and Dr. Keshishian,

Thank you again for our productive discussion during our last meeting. Per your request, attached are the most relevant articles related to the cost and utilization impact of allowing, if not encouraging, your members to have direct access to physical therapist services.

As with all research, there are some limitations. However, each study provides an additional data point that, when taken together, provide consistent and compelling evidence for such a policy change.

The following studies provide evidence for the reduction in health care costs and utilization when patients seek physical therapy care first and without a physician referral. It is important to note that not only is the cost of the PT episode of care lower; all costs associated with the condition are lower as well owing to reduced imaging utilization, opioid prescriptions, etc. It is also important to note that these are studies from the US. There are numerous other studies with similar results in other countries:

Mitchell JM, de Lissoyoy G. A comparison of resource use and cost in direct access versus physician referral episodes of physical therapy. *Phys Ther.* 1997;77:10-18.

Pendergast P et al. Physician-Referred and Self-Referred Episodes of Outpatient Physical Therapy. *Health Serv Res.* 2012 Apr;47(2):633-654.

Badke MB et al. Physical Therapy Direct Patient Access Versus Physician Patient-Referred Episodes of Care: Comparisons of Cost, Resource Utilization & Outcomes. *Physical Therapy Journal of Policy, Administration and Leadership.* 2014;14:J3-J13.

Ojha HA et al. Direct access compared with referred physical therapy episodes of care: a systematic review. *Phys Ther.* 2014;94:14-30.

Frogner BK et al. Does Unrestricted Direct Access to Physical Therapy Reduce Utilization and Health Spending? *Health Cost Institute Health Policy and Management Issue Briefs.* 2016; Paper 41:1-9.

Riley SP et al. Retrospective analysis of physical therapy utilization by the specificity of the diagnosis and order written on the referral. *Physiotherapy Theory and Practice.* 2016;(32):461-467.

The Moran Company (2017). Initial Treatment Intervention and Average Total Medicare A/B Costs for FFS Beneficiaries with an Incident Low Back Pain (Lumbago) Diagnosis in CY 2014. Available at:  
<http://www.aptqi.com/Resources/documents/APTQI-Complete-Study-Initial-Treatment-Intervention-Lumbago-May-2017.pdf>

The Moran Company (2017). Physical Therapy Episodes for Low Back Pain: Medicare Spending and Intensity of Physical Therapy Services. Available at:  
<https://www.aptqi.com/Resources/documents/APTQI-Complete-Study-Physical-Therapy-Episodes-Lumbago-October-2017.pdf>

Denninger TR et al. The Influence of Patient Choice of First Provider on Costs and Outcomes: Analysis From a Physical Therapy Patient Registry. *J Orthop Sports Phys Ther* 2018;48:63-71.

Frogner BK et al. Physical Therapy as the First Point of Care to Treat Low Back Pain: An Instrumental Variables Approach to Estimate Impact on Opioid Prescription, Health Care Utilization, and Costs. *Health Serv Res.* 2018 Dec;53(6):4629-4646.

Mabry LM et al. Safety Events and Privilege Utilization Rates in Advanced Practice Physical Therapy Compared to Traditional Primary Care: An Observational Study. *Mil Med.* 2019 Jul 19. pii: usz176. doi: 10.1093/milmed/usz176. [Epub ahead of print].

The following studies illustrate the reductions in healthcare costs that are achieved when patients receive early/timely physical therapy care. Removal of the requirement for physician referral would allow patients to seek earlier/more timely care resulting in lower costs:

Horn ME et al. Timing of physical therapy consultation on 1-year healthcare utilization and costs in patients seeking care for neck pain: a retrospective cohort. *BMC Health Serv Res.* 2018;18(1):887-896.

Sun E et al. Association of Early Physical Therapy With Long-term Opioid Use Among Opioid-Naive Patients With Musculoskeletal Pain. *JAMA Network Open.* 2018;1(8):e185909.

Liu et al. Immediate Physical Therapy Initiation in Patients With Acute Low Back Pain Is Associated With a Reduction in Downstream Health Care Utilization and Costs. *Phys Ther.* 2018;98(5):336-347.

Again, thank you for your careful consideration of this issue.

mike

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