



American Physical Therapy Association

PTeam Alert Newsletter

APTA'S GRASSROOTS NETWORK — July 2015 Edition

1111 N. Fairfax Street, Alexandria, VA 22314

703-706-8509, kensprague@apta.org

The Power of Collaboration

By: Justin Moore, PT, DPT

Executive Vice President, Public Affairs

We have always been taught that there is power in collaboration; that working together can often be the determining factor of success. Anne Frank once said, "Alone we can do so little, together we can do so much."

In June as we wrapped up another successful and impactful PT Day on Capitol Hill, I was reminded of this idea through our efforts to carry out APTA's vision to transform society. With over 1100 APTA physical therapists, physical therapist assistants and students on Capitol Hill, we once again witnessed the power that comes from carrying our message to Congress with one strong, combined and collaborative voice. These 1100 advocates successfully represented not only themselves and their unique practice settings, chapters and sections but also APTA as a whole.

Collaboration carried forward in late June, when we were able to capitalize on the Hill Day efforts and achieve Senate Finance Committee passage of S. 313, legislation to allow physical therapists to enter into locum tenens arrangements with other PTs under the Medicare program. If there was ever a win that illustrated the power of teamwork, this would be it. APTA and the Private Practice Section worked tirelessly together to bring resolution to this issue and ensure continuity of care and access to physical therapy services. This legislation and our collaborative effort is further highlighted later in this newsletter.

Ensuring that physical therapists have a seat at the policy making table is instrumental as providers navigate the rapidly changing health care environment. The advocacy work APTA, its chapters, sections and individual members are carrying out every day is what keeps us at the table and allows our voice to be heard. We all know that our work continues well after Hill Day ends and it's the spirit of collaboration that allows us to move the profession forward, to transform lives.

2015 PT Day on Capitol Hill Overview

This year's PT Day on Capitol Hill was a huge success! The event, which took place June 3-4, had over 1100 APTA members in attendance. The physical therapists, physical therapist assistants and students of physical therapy participated in a PT Day on Capitol Hill Rally and then met with their respective members of Congress to spread the message about the transformative power of the physical therapy.

During the over 440 Congressional meetings, our members advocated on behalf of four different issues from APTA's policy agenda. These issues included: [repeal of the therapy cap](#), [locum tenens](#), [PT inclusion in the National Health Service Corps](#) and [concussion management legislation](#). Through our members' advocacy, we were able to gain dozens of new cosponsors for the bills and we even saw the Medicare locum tenens bill (S. 313) successfully move out of the Senate Finance Committee and is now awaiting a vote on the Senate floor.

Thank you to all of those who participated in the 2015 PT Day on Capitol Hill! With your help we made sure Congress understood the importance of physical therapy and the impact it has on the lives of millions of people across the country. We hope you can join us again next year for APTA's 2016 Federal Affairs Forum (dates and venue is yet to be determined).

For more information about the legislation we advocated on behalf of or to monitor their status in Congress, please download [APTA's Action App](#). Feel free to email Ken Sprague at kensprague@apta.org with any comments or questions you may have.

Get to Know Your Legislators This August

The August congressional recess begins in a few weeks and it is essential that APTA members continue to educate members of Congress about the importance of physical therapy services. We strongly encourage APTA members to take advantage of opportunities to meet your legislators during the August recess. Members of Congress will be holding town hall meetings, conducting business out of their district offices, and visiting areas of their district. This year's recess begins on August 3 and continues until September 4.

Practice Visits

Practice visits can provide a lasting impression demonstrating the power of physical therapy to your legislators first-hand. There is no better way to educate lawmakers about physical therapy than to invite them to visit your work setting. Many legislators do not have a clear idea what physical therapy is and the effect it has on their constituents. Practice visits provide lawmakers with real-life snapshots of the impacts of the Medicare therapy cap and other policy issues. Practice visits also display the knowledge and experience that makes PTs and PTAs effective patient advocates. APTA has several resources to help you prepare for a practice visit, including our [Practice Visit Guide](#). For more information on practice visits contact Ken Sprague at 703-706-8509, or you can email him at kensprague@apta.org.

District Meetings

Connecting with your legislator while in their district is very important. It is much easier to meet face-to-face with your lawmakers during a district recess. Call your congressional member's district office **TODAY** to set up a meeting to discuss APTA's priority legislation over the August recess. Position papers, background information and frequently asked questions can be found on [APTA's Advocacy website](#). If you do not know the contact information for your legislator's district office please visit www.house.gov or www.senate.gov and select your Representative or Senator to visit your legislator's website (the contact information for the district office is usually at the bottom of the front page of each legislator's website). When you call the district office, ask to speak to the scheduler.

Town Hall Meetings

House and Senate members seek opportunities in August to share with constituents what's been going on in Washington and hear citizens' takes on the issues. Thus, lawmakers convene town hall meetings, perhaps several, depending on the size of the district or state. These gatherings are generally small, meaning that a single well-organized group can make a big impression. Just imagine the impact a group of 10 to 20 PTs and PTAs could have at a meeting; informing a House member or senator about health care issues that affect the profession and the patients and clients it serves. For more information on town hall meetings please visit the "Grassroots" tab in the [Legislative Action Center](#) or contact Ken Sprague at 703-706-8509, or you can email him at kensprague@apta.org.

Fundraisers

Members of Congress will also be holding fundraising events during the August recess. These fundraisers provide APTA members with additional opportunities to develop relationships with lawmakers. If a member of Congress supports physical therapy issues, PT-PAC, APTA's federal political action committee, can provide financial support for Association members to attend campaign fundraisers. In fact, it is more valuable to APTA to have constituents participate in these events back home than it is to have lobbyists attend fundraisers in Washington. Not only are you a constituent who can

vote for the candidate, but PAC contributions go farther at home. For more information on getting involved in PT-PAC activities contact Michael Matlack at 703-706-3163, or you can email him at michaelmatlack@apta.org

If you are interested in getting involved this summer, but do not know where to start, visit APTA's [Tools for Advocates webpage](#). We have several resources to help you make the most of your August advocacy activities, [including instructional videos](#), [testimonials from your colleagues](#), and our [Grassroots Toolkit](#). If you do not have time to meet with your legislators this summer but still want to help, download the [APTA Action app](#) and send them an email or make a [donation to the PT-PAC](#).

PT State Briefs from Around the Statehouses

This year has been busy in state legislatures from Annapolis to Olympia. Here are a few summaries of some of the 2015 bills of interest that have been enacted so far:

Insurance/Payment

- [Colorado - Fair Copays - 6/8/15 \(.pdf\)](#)
- [Washington - Health Insurance Transparency and Prior Authorization - 5/19/15 \(.pdf\)](#)

Patient Access

- [Georgia Direct Access, Term and Title Protection, Physical Therapy Scope of Practice - 5/05/15 \(.pdf\)](#)
- [New Mexico, Direct Access, Patient Access to PT Services - 4/20/15 \(.pdf\)](#)
- [Virginia Direct Access - 4/15/15 \(.pdf\)](#)

Scope of Practice

- [Maryland Disability License Plates/Placard - 4/27/15 \(.pdf\)](#)
- [Tennessee: Dry Needling, Scope of Practice - 04/16/15 \(.pdf\)](#)

Locum Tenens Passes Committee, Now Going to Full Senate for Vote

Recently (June 24, 2015), The Prevent Interruptions in Physical Therapy Act (S. 313) was passed by the US Senate Finance Committee. This legislation, as amended, would extend so-called "locum tenens" provisions to PTs in rural and underserved areas to allow a PT to bring in another licensed physical therapist to treat Medicare during temporary absences for illness, pregnancy, vacation, or continuing medical education. In order to limit budgetary impact, the legislation was amended to allow locum tenens for PTs in [non-Metropolitan Statistical Areas](#), Medically Underserved Areas (MUAs), and Health Professions Shortage Areas (HPSAs) [as defined by the US Department of Health and Human Services](#). This legislation passed unanimously by voice vote in the Committee and may now be considered by the full Senate.

The bill was introduced by Senators Charles Grassley (R-IA) and Bob Casey (D-PA) in the Senate, with a companion bill introduced (H.R. 556) by Representatives Gus Bilirakis (R-FL) and Ben Ray Lujan (D-NM) in the House. APTA will monitor the progress of this legislation and provide updates via the [PTeam](#) as it advances through Congress.

Bill Round-up

Most of you are well aware of recent activity on the Medicare Therapy Cap and Locum Tenens but APTA is advocating on behalf of several other important pieces of legislation currently working their way through Congress. These include:

New! Medicare Telehealth Parity Act of 2015 (H.R. 2948)

- Expands telehealth providers eligible to provide telehealth services to: physical therapist, certified diabetes educator, respiratory therapist, occupational therapist, speech language pathologist, audiologist.
- Introduced by Representatives Mike Thompson (D-CA), Gregg Harper (R-MS), Diane Black (R-TN), Peter Welch (D-VT)
- Referred to the House Energy and Commerce Committee and House Ways and Means Committee

Physical Therapist Workforce and Patient Access Act (H.R. 2342, S. 1426)

- Legislation that would authorize physical therapists to participate in the National Health Service Corps (NHSC) Loan Repayment Program. This legislation would provide greater access to physical therapist services in rural and underserved areas and meet the growing demand for physical therapists in the future.
- Introduced by Representatives John Shimkus (R-IL) and Diane DeGette (D-CO) in the House and Senators John Tester (D-MT) and Roger Wicker (R-MS) in the Senate
- Referred to House Energy and Commerce (E&C) Subcommittee on Health and Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions (HELP) Committee in the Senate
- H.R. 2342 currently has 27 cosponsors and S. 1426 has 1 cosponsor

Supporting Athletes, Families, and Educators to Protect the Lives of Athletic Youth Act (SAFE PLAY Act), (H.R. 829/ S. 436)

- Legislation that would allow for the development of concussion management guidelines that address the prevention, identification, treatment, and management of concussions in school-aged children and include physical therapists in return to participation decision making. This legislation would address a growing public health problem and support safety in student athletes.
- Introduced in the House by Representatives Lois Capps (D-CA) and Bill Pascrell (D-NJ) and in the Senate by Senator Robert Menendez (D-NJ)
- Referred to E&C, and Education and Workforce Committees in the House and the Senate HELP Committee
- The SAFE PLAY Act has 30 cosponsors in the House and no cosponsors in the Senate

Enhancing the Stature and Visibility of Medical Rehabilitation Research at the NIH Act (H.R. 1631/S. 800)

- Legislation that would improve, coordinate, and enhance the stature and visibility of rehabilitation research at the world's premier medical research agency. This would be achieved through the development of greater links within NIH to help coordinate rehabilitation research across institutes, development of a rehabilitation research plan to be updated every 5 years and involvement of the Office of the NIH Director in the coordination of activities to raise the stature of rehabilitation research.
- H.R. 1631 was introduced by Representatives Jim Langevin (D-RI) and Gregg Harper (R-MS) and S. 800 was introduced by Senators Mark Kirk (R-IL) and Michael Bennet (D-CO)
- Referred to E&C Subcommittee on Health and Senate HELP Committee
- H.R. 1631 has 1 cosponsor and S. 800 has 4 cosponsors

Medicare Patient Empowerment Act (H.R. 1650)

- Legislation that would provide physical therapists with the ability to privately contract with Medicare beneficiaries. If passed, this bill would allow physical therapists to "opt out" of the Medicare program and privately contract with Medicare beneficiaries.
- The bill was introduced by Representative Tom Price (R-GA) on March 26, 2015
- H.R. 1650 was referred to the E&C and Ways and Means Committees

- H.R. 1650 has 28 cosponsors

Feel free to contact Ken Sprague at kensprague@apta.org or 703-706-8509 with any questions pertaining to the aforementioned legislation.



Registration Opens on July 13 for the 2015 APTA State Policy and Payment Forum

Registration for the 2015 State Policy and Payment Forum opens on July 13, which will be held September 19-21 at the Grand Hyatt in Denver, Colorado. This event is designed to increase your involvement in, and knowledge of state legislative issues that have an impact on the practice and payment of physical therapy, and to improve your advocacy efforts at the state level. Programming will focus on physical therapy payment & legislative issues at the state level and will include presentations on state scope of practice issues, payment issues, state legislative advocacy, Medicaid, infringement challenges, effective legislative testifying, state licensure issues, and much more!

You will hear from influential public policy makers and other physical therapy advocates; collaborate with colleagues in developing your chapter or section's advocacy efforts; and network with other professionals from across the country. Chapter presidents, legislative chairs, reimbursement chairs, chapter executives, lobbyists, students, and anyone interested in state-level advocacy should attend! You must register online as there will no onsite registration in Denver. For additional information and to register online go to: www.apta.org/stateforum

PT-PAC Party at Slowdown

Come have fun with your friends at PT-PAC's late night event during National Student Conclave. This year, the event will take place at [Slowdown](#) (a 5 minute walk from the conference hotel)! The event will be on Friday, October 23, from 9:00 pm–Midnight. Tickets are \$20 each. Photo ID required (must be at least 21 years of age to attend). The event always sells out so buy your ticket now when registering for conference! For event information, contact Michael Matlack at michaelmatlack@apta.org or 800/999-2782, ext 3163. Help protect your future and support PT-PAC on Capitol Hill.

Contributions to PT-PAC are not tax deductible as charitable contributions. Contributions are voluntary. The amount given by the contributor, or the refusal to give, will not benefit or disadvantage the person being solicited. Your contribution will be used to support candidates for federal office who support physical therapy issues.