

APTA Opposes the PTA Differential

Background

Physical therapist assistants provide services under the supervision and direction of the physical therapist. A physical therapist delegates components of care based on the scope and skills of the physical therapist assistant. When a physical therapist assistant is engaged in the treatment of the patient they are always doing so as part of a PT/PTA team and the physical therapist is continuously coordinating the care delivery.

Total cost of care

The PTA differential does not acknowledge the positive impact of PT on total cost of care. This policy will result in reduced access to physical therapist services which will shift patient choice to more costly and invasive alternatives.

Medicare PTA policy and commercial payers

- Medicare's policy is an effective 12% cut (80% of the total is subject to the 15% differential).
- Medicare must maintain budget neutrality as required by federal legislation. The Medicare business and economic model differs significantly from the function of a commercial payer.
- Commercial payers are not required to follow Medicare.
- This payment differential will significantly hamper enrollee access to care.
- Medicare is evaluating and gathering additional data to assess future policy adjustments.