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When to Refer??

Well Known:

- Sub-acute/Chronic Non-specific LBP
- Whiplash, cervical strain
- Rotator Cuff Strains
- Acute Knee Injuries
- Ankle Sprains, Achilles Tendinopathy
- Lateral/Anterior Hip Pain

Lesser Known:

- Injury Risk Reduction
- Return to Sport Screening
- General and Specific Strength Training
- Tendinopathies
- Post-Partum
- Rib/Diaphragm Complaints

Traditional “Surgical Complaints” That Benefit from Non-Op PT

- Non-Mechanical Meniscus Tear
- ACL Rupture in Non-Contact Sport Athletes
- Partial Rotator Cuff Tear
- Shoulder/Hip Labral Tear or Instability
- Femoral-Acetabular Impingement
- Lumbar Disc Bulge/Herniation



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Primary Care Providers as the “Gatekeeper”

As Primary Care Physicians (PCP), you are often the first stop for patients experiencing musculoskeletal pain. According to Pendergast et al. (2012) many of the insurance plans utilize the “gatekeeper model,” requiring patients to have their physician initiate a

referral for any specialty including PT services. Additionally, as noted in the study below, almost 60% of the patients had a PPO-type plan suggesting their initial stop for a musculoskeletal complaint will often be their PCP. We understand how much trust this shows in patients regarding their Pri-

mary Care and we want to be available to offer a conservative option of treatment for your patients! A team approach to managing our patients will not only keep costs down and decrease opiate use, but will also allow us to provide the absolute best care possible!

Spine

HEALTH SERVICES RESEARCH

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Primary Care Referral of Patients With Low Back Pain to Physical Therapy

Impact on Future Health Care Utilization and Costs

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In 2012, Fritz et al. completed a retrospective cohort study analyzing physical therapy utilization following PCP consultation. In this study, **only 7%** of patients with low back pain utilized physical therapy after their PCP visit. The authors reported early utilization (within 14 days) of physical therapy by patients were **less likely to utilize opioid medication for pain relief**, decreased likelihood of advanced imaging, additional physician visits, major surgery, and in-

jections. In regards to costs, early vs. delayed physical therapy utilization reduced costs by 50% (*approx. \$2736!*). These numbers have been reproduced by other studies as well and highlight the importance of creating a conservative option for our patients. At Nevada Physical Therapy we strive to empower patients with the tools they need to be independent, healthy, and pain-free individuals and we look forward to working with you to fight this epidemic.

Referral to Physical Therapy Lowers Care Utilization for LBP

An interesting study recently published by Fritz et al. (*Health Serv Res, 2015*) found average health care costs over the course of a year were 66% lower for patients who began with a physical therapy referral. These costs were compared to advanced imaging and physician specialist referrals. Those who received imaging studies first tended to take a different course leading to increased odds of surgery, injections, and emergency department visits. With imaging, we often run into a patient's focus on their imaging study, *becoming their diagnosis* so to speak. This is often called a "labeling effect" and at Nevada Physical Therapy, we appreciate imaging and believe it often is a *contributor* to a patient's complaint but rarely gives a full picture (pun intended). One of our primary philosophies is to show our patients they are resilient, adaptable, and anti-fragile individuals and through an appropriate exercise program and multi-factorial treatment approach, they are capable of "more than their diagnosis."

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EPIDEMIOLOGY

Stagnant Physical Therapy Referral Rates Alongside Rising Opioid Prescription Rates in Patients With Low Back Pain in the United States 1997–2010

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and Matthew Smuck, MD*

While insurance companies continue to shift the financial burden to the patients, it is imperative to find cost-effective approaches to managing their complaints. Paired with decreased opiate use, physical therapy can help your patients in a multitude of areas. We list a few on the previous page but you can also visit our "Services" tab on our website: NEVPT.com for more info.



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