

HEALTH PRIORITIES FOR POPULATIONS AND INDIVIDUALS HOD P06-15-20-11 [Position]

That the following population health priorities guide the American Physical Therapy Association (APTA) work in the areas of prevention, wellness, fitness, health promotion, and management of disease and disability. Physical therapists can positively impact these areas and, where opportunity exists, can improve the health status of populations and individuals.

Physical therapists also can help prevent secondary health conditions commonly associated with many chronic diseases and disabilities. The population health priorities identified to most relate to physical therapist practice in primary and secondary prevention and in disease management are:

- I. Active living¹
 - A. Physical inactivity is a risk factor that contributes to onset and progression of diseases and conditions in individuals of all ages, including diabetes, heart disease, pulmonary disease, obesity, metabolic syndrome, psychosocial health, stroke, certain cancers, and certain musculoskeletal conditions.
 - B. Physical therapists have unique opportunities with the following populations identified by the US National Prevention Strategy (USNPS):
 1. Aging individuals and populations (risk of falls, more individuals living longer with chronic diseases and conditions, impact of reduced physical fitness on quality of life)
 2. Individuals and populations of all ages with health disparities
 3. Individuals and populations of all ages with chronic conditions, disabilities, and diseases that impact their ability to remain independent and physically active
- II. Injury prevention¹
 - A. Reducing injury improves physical and emotional health. Injury can be prevented by making homes, communities, schools, and worksites safer and by implementing community-based prevention policies and programs.
 - B. Physical therapists have unique opportunities in the following areas of injury prevention identified by USNPS:
 1. Falls prevention
 2. Workplace injury prevention
 3. Community-based injury prevention
- III. Secondary prevention in chronic disease and disability management
 - A. Reducing or preventing health conditions that accompany many chronic diseases and disabilities helps to improve physical and emotional health and optimize individuals' participation in society. Secondary conditions and their risk factors can be identified and ameliorated through screening and recognition.
 - B. Priorities for physical therapists in secondary prevention in chronic disease and disability management include:
 1. Diseases and disabilities that impair an individual's body function or structure
 2. Diseases and disabilities that limit an individual's activity
 3. Diseases and disabilities that restrict an individual's participation in society
 4. Diseases and disabilities that require modification of environmental factors to allow for full participation in society

Physical therapists provide education, behavioral strategies, patient advocacy, referral opportunities, and identification of supportive resources after screening for the following additional USNPS health priorities¹:

- A. Stress management
- B. Smoking cessation
- C. Sleep health

- D. Nutrition optimization
- E. Weight management
- F. Alcohol moderation and substance-free living
- G. Violence-free living
- H. Adherence to health care recommendations

References:

¹. US Department of Health and Human Services. *National Prevention Strategy*.
<http://www.surgeongeneral.gov/priorities/prevention/strategy/report.pdf>. Accessed 03/11/15.

Explanation of Reference Numbers:

BOD P00-00-00-00 stands for Board of Directors/month/year/page/vote in the Board of Directors Minutes; the "P" indicates that it is a position (see below). For example, BOD P11-97-06-18 means that this position can be found in the November 1997 Board of Directors minutes on Page 6 and that it was Vote 18.

P: Position | S: Standard | G: Guideline | Y: Policy | R: Procedure