MANAGE CHRONIC PAIN WITH THE HELP OF A PHYSICAL THERAPIST
Move Forward Radio explores chronic pain with guests of “Pain Matters”—
a Discovery Channel documentary

ALEXANDRIA, VA, December 5, 2013 – The American Physical Therapy Association (APTA) today launched a Move Forward Radio episode called, “Pain Matters: Bringing Chronic Pain Out of the Shadows,” to discuss the pivotal role of physical therapist treatment in managing chronic pain. The segment features Melanie Rosenblatt, MD, medical director of pain management at the North Broward Medical Center in Pompano Beach, Florida; Penney Cowan, founder and CEO of the American Chronic Pain Association; Derek McGinnis, a United States Navy veteran who sustained debilitating injuries while serving in Iraq; and physical therapist John Garzione, PT, DPT, president of the Pain Management Special Interest Group of APTA’s Orthopaedic Section.

Chronic pain, which is defined as pain that lasts for several months, or in some cases, years, affects at least 116 million Americans each year. Physical therapists play an important role in managing chronic pain by administering treatments that include strengthening and flexibility exercises, manual therapy, posture awareness, and body mechanics instruction. Physical therapists can also help the patient to understand the underlying cause of their pain.

The Discovery Channel also explores the issue of chronic pain in an in-depth documentary called, “Pain Matters,” airing December 7 and December 14 at 8 am ET. The documentary features pain management experts as well as individuals who struggle with chronic pain.

According to Dr Rosenblatt, “Chronic pain is, in and of itself, a chronic illness. Chronic pain is its own disease, and it can be very isolating. It can lead to depression, and in many cases, suicide.”

Physical therapy plays a vital role in helping patients manage and overcome chronic pain. “We use a variety of evidence-guided treatments to deal with chronic pain,” said Garzione. “When we go low and slow, physical therapists are able to gradually increase the intensity of active exercises. We also educate the patient about how brain and central nervous system hypersensitivity contribute to their chronic pain. We encourage our patients to never give up, that this does not have to be a way of life.”

After returning from Iraq, McGinnis said chronic pain made it difficult to cope with daily life, and it took time to find the help he needed. “I felt so hindered by the pain that I was coping with, and I wasn’t getting the answers that I needed at that time,” he explained.
People with chronic pain, like McGinnis, are often advised to participate in a multidisciplinary pain management program, which consists of a team of doctors and other health care professionals, including physical therapists, who share a common goal of improving the patient’s quality of life.

McGinnis found support after meeting a health care provider who took the time to listen to his concerns. “I was grateful that it wasn’t in my head. I wasn’t alone. I had a team. I wasn’t Derek with the pain problem, I was just Derek. I was moving forward to find some resolution.”

According to Cowan, “The most important thing for people with chronic pain is they want that validation, they want to be believed.”

The American Physical Therapy Association represents more than 85,000 physical therapists, physical therapist assistants, and students of physical therapy nationwide. Learn more about conditions physical therapists can treat and find a physical therapist in your area at www.MoveForwardPT.com. Consumers are encouraged to follow us on Twitter (@MoveForwardPT) and Facebook.

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