

NEWS RELEASE

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Michigan Grants Patients Direct Access to Physical Therapists

All 50 states and DC now allow for some form of treatment without the need of a referral

ALEXANDRIA, VA, July 1, 2014 — Today, Michigan Gov Rick Snyder signed legislation that will allow patients in Michigan to go directly to a physical therapist for evaluation and treatment without a physician's referral. With the enactment of SB 690, Michigan joins 49 other states and the District of Columbia in adopting some level of direct access to treatment by physical therapists without the need of a referral.

"This is a significant milestone for the people of Michigan, and for the physical therapy profession," said Paul A. Rockar Jr, PT, DPT, MS, president of the American Physical Therapy Association (APTA). "APTA has long advocated for improved patient access to physical therapists, and I applaud Michigan's achievement in making this policy a reality."

[SB 690](#), sponsored by Sen John Moolenaar and promoted by the Michigan Chapter of APTA (MPTA), creates the option for patients to see a physical therapist without a referral or prescription from a physician, for up to 21 days or 10 treatment visits. The new law will also allow patients to see a physical therapist directly for injury prevention and fitness promotion, with no time or visit limit. In addition to establishing direct access, SB 690 specifies that only licensed physical therapists may use the term "doctor of physical therapy" in connection with their services. The passage of this legislation is the culmination of many years of hard-fought effort on the part of MPTA that at times faced significant opposition. A similar bill was sponsored in the Michigan House of Representatives by Rep Margaret O'Brien.

"The goal of direct access to physical therapy in Michigan has been 34 years in the making," said MPTA President Sue Talley, PT, DPT, C/NDT. "This achievement would not have been possible without the commitment of multiple MPTA presidents; legislative chairs; the grass roots efforts of our members and patients; and Sen Moolenaar and Rep O'Brien."

"This is not only a victory for physical therapists in our state, but more importantly represents a great benefit to the people of Michigan who need the services of physical therapists," said Craig Miller, PT, MPTA's legislative director. "SB 690 will better equip physical therapists in Michigan to help our state achieve the triple aim of health care—to provide high-quality care that is cost effective and accessible for the health care consumer."

The milestone of achieving some form of direct access to treatment in all 51 US jurisdictions comes on the heels of achieving direct access to evaluation throughout the US in 2013. However, while this is a historic achievement for the physical therapy profession, the fight for unfettered patient access to physical therapist services is far from over.

"There are a number of direct access states with provisions tied to their direct access law that are not based on evidence or on the best interests of the patient," said Rockar. "APTA's work will continue to remove these unwarranted provisions tied to treatment provided via direct access."

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The new Michigan law will take effect January 1, 2015. APTA provided a direct access grant to the Michigan Chapter to support its efforts on SB 690.

The Michigan Chapter of the American Physical Therapy Association (MPTA) is a professional membership association serving more than 2,600 active and retired physical therapists and physical therapist assistants, and physical therapy students in Michigan.

The American Physical Therapy Association represents more than 88,000 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](https://twitter.com/MoveForwardPT)) and [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/MoveForwardPT).

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