

The Promoting Physical Activity for Americans Act (H.R. 2891/S. 1608)



Position

The American Physical Therapy Association supports the Promoting Physical Activity for Americans Act (H.R. 2891/S. 1608), bipartisan legislation that would require the Department of Health and Human Services to provide evidence-based physical activity recommendations for the general public. S. 1608 was introduced by Sens. Roger Wicker, R-Miss., Sherrod Brown, D-Ohio, Kyrsten Sinema, D-Ariz., and Shelley Moore Capito, R-W.Va.; the bill passed the Senate on December 19, 2019. H.R. 2891 was introduced by Reps. Ron Kind, D-Wis., and David McKinley, R-W.Va.

Background

According to the Department of Health and Human Services, 39% of adults and 18% of youth in the United States are considered obese. Obesity can lead to an increased likelihood of developing life-threatening diseases such as diabetes, heart disease, and certain forms of cancer. One of the contributors to obesity is physical inactivity. Less than 5% of adults participate in 30 minutes of physical activity each day, and more than 80% of adolescents do not meet the guidelines of aerobic physical activity for youth. The Centers for Disease and Control Prevention (2017) indicates that poor diet and physical inactivity cause over 400,000 deaths each year.

Promoting Physical Activity and Exercise

H.R. 2891/S. 1608 would require the Secretary of HHS to publish a report every 10 years providing physical activity recommendations for the people of the United States. The report would be based on the most current evidence-based scientific and medical knowledge and would include additional recommendations for population subgroups, such as children or individuals with disabilities, including information regarding engagement in appropriate physical activity and avoiding inactivity. The physical activity information and recommendations in the

report would be considered by relevant federal agencies in carrying out relevant federal health programs. This report also would help to educate and guide the patients and clients served by physical therapists and physical therapist assistants.

The Role of Physical Therapists and Physical Therapist Assistants in Health Promotion

Physical therapists and physical therapist assistants play a unique role in society in prevention, wellness, fitness, health promotion, and management of disease and disability by serving as a dynamic bridge between health and the delivery of health care services for individuals across the life span. Physical therapists are experts in rehabilitation and habilitation and in promoting lifestyle changes that can improve overall health and prevent the need for avoidable health care services. Physical therapists integrate scientific principles of movement, function, and exercise progression to promote physical activity and improve health outcomes for individuals and populations. Additionally, physical therapists design and develop integrated clinical and community screening programs to prevent and manage disease and disability, referring individuals to other services, when appropriate, as part of a community-based integrated team focused on healthy lifestyle behaviors.

Hales CM, et al. Prevalence of Obesity Among Adults and Youth: United States, 2015–2016. NCHS data brief, no 288. Hyattsville, MD: National Center for Health Statistics. 2017. <https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/databriefs/db288.pdf>.

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. <https://www.hhs.gov/fitness/resource-center/facts-and-statistics/index.html>.

“80% of US adults and adolescents are insufficiently active. As a result, many Americans currently have or are likely to experience chronic diseases, including heart disease, diabetes, obesity, and depression.”

https://health.gov/sites/default/files/2019-09/Physical_Activity_Guidelines_2nd_edition.pdf

Facts About Physical Therapists and Physical Therapist Assistants



Who We Are

Physical therapists are movement experts who help to optimize people's physical function, movement, performance, health, quality of life, and well-being. Physical therapists evaluate, diagnose, and manage movement conditions for individuals, and they also provide contributions to public health services aimed at improving population health and the human experience. Physical therapist assistants are educated and licensed or certified clinicians who provide care under the direction and supervision of a licensed physical therapist. PTs and PTAs care for people of all ages and abilities.

What We Do

After performing an evaluation and making a diagnosis, physical therapists create and implement personalized plans based on best available evidence to help their patients improve mobility, manage pain and other chronic conditions, recover from injury, and prevent future injury and chronic disease. PTs and PTAs empower people to be active participants in their care and well-being. They practice collaboratively with other health professionals to ensure the best clinical outcomes.

Where We Practice

PTs and PTAs provide services to people in a variety of settings, including outpatient clinics or offices; hospitals; inpatient rehabilitation facilities; skilled nursing, extended care, or subacute facilities; education or research centers; schools; community centers; hospices; industrial, workplace, or other occupational environments; and fitness centers and sports training facilities.

Education and Licensure

As of 2016, all PTs must receive a doctor of physical therapy degree from an accredited physical therapist education program before taking and passing a national licensure exam that permits them to practice. Licensure is required in each state (or other jurisdiction, including the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands) in which a PT practices. PTAs must complete a two-year associate's degree from an accredited physical therapist assistant program and pass a national exam. State licensure or certification is required in each state (or jurisdiction) in which a PTA works.

American Physical Therapy Association

The American Physical Therapy Association is a national organization representing more than 100,000 physical therapists, physical therapist assistants, and students nationwide. Our mission is to build a community that advances the profession of physical therapy to improve the health of society.

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Cosponsor H.R. 2891/S. 1608 Today!

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