

# HHS Secretary Becerra Calls on Physical Therapists to Continue Delivery of Quality Care to Help the Nation Maintain and Regain Health



**For Immediate Release:  
Aug. 15, 2022**

**Contact: Emilio J. Rouco  
public-relations@apta.org**

Washington, D.C. – Today Secretary Xavier Becerra joined physical therapists at the American Physical Therapy Association’s inaugural APTA Leadership Congress in the nation’s capital. Becerra, who is the 25th Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services and the first Latino to hold the office, spoke of the challenges that lie ahead in health care and highlighted the important role physical therapists play in keeping Americans healthy and health care affordable.

Becerra addressed APTA’s House of Delegates, the governing body of the association. The group joined together this week to discuss the future of physical therapists and physical therapist assistants and the important role they play in the delivery of quality, individualized services to keep Americans healthy, fit, active, and moving. Becerra’s address comes at critical time in health care, when barriers to essential health, such as payment cuts under Medicare and increasing administrative burden, have become more and more challenging. The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services’ proposed 2023 Medicare Physician Fee Schedule rule includes deep cuts to essential services provided by dozens of health care providers, including physical therapists. The proposed 4.42% cut to the fee schedule’s conversion factor would result in the conversion factor dropping below early 1990s levels. CMS also implemented an additional 15% cut in 2022 for services provided by a physical therapist assistant, impacting access to care in rural and underserved areas.

“This is a moment where I believe we can really speak differently about health — certainly our public health care system. For more than 100 years physical therapists have been essential caregivers, treating people with muscular and skeletal injuries caused by war, assisting people living with disabilities, and battling opioid addiction,” Becerra said. He went on to say that now more than ever we need physical therapists’ pioneering spirit in fighting to address the many challenges that affect the health and well-being of the American people such as navigating longer-term effects of COVID-19 that have disrupted daily lives. He indicated that this is especially relevant to physical therapists given their role in helping this country maintain and regain health.

Becerra was introduced by Michigan State Representative Julie Rogers, PT, who is serving in her first term representing the 60th House District, which includes Kalamazoo and portions of Portage and Kalamazoo Township. She is a practicing physical therapist and served on the Kalamazoo County Commission for eight years, including serving as board chair.

“As a practicing physical therapist for more than 20 years, I am humbled to have the special honor of introducing U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Secretary Xavier Becerra today at the American Physical Therapy Association House of Delegates,” Rogers said. “He has been a longtime friend of the physical therapy profession in ensuring access to care. During his time in Congress, he championed changing the arbitrary caps placed on outpatient physical therapy services. He has also fought diligently for the Affordable Care Act, saving care for more than 100 million Americans with preexisting conditions.”

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The American Physical Therapy Association represents 100,000 physical therapists, physical therapist assistants, and students of physical therapy nationwide. Visit [apta.org](http://apta.org) to learn more.