



Oct. 17, 2022

President Joseph R. Biden
Biden-Harris Administration
White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave., NW
Washington, DC 20500

Re: Biden-Harris Administration National Strategy on Hunger, Nutrition, and Health

Dear President Biden:

On behalf of our more than 100,000 member physical therapists, physical therapist assistants, and students of physical therapy, the American Physical Therapy Association commends the Biden-Harris administration on the White House's National Strategy on Hunger, Nutrition, and Health.

APTA is dedicated to building a community that advances the physical therapy profession to improve the health of society. As experts in rehabilitation, prehabilitation, and habilitation, physical therapists play a unique role in society in prevention, wellness, fitness, health promotion, and management of disease and disability for individuals across the age span, helping individuals improve overall health and prevent the need for avoidable health care services. Physical therapists' roles include education, direct intervention, research, advocacy, and collaborative consultation. These roles are essential to the profession's vision of transforming society by optimizing movement to improve the human experience.

As a health profession, we agree that everyone has an important role to play in addressing the burden of diet- and physical activity-related diseases. This historic White House package — the first in over half a century — demonstrates the Biden-Harris administration's commitment to closing health disparities across the country by ending hunger and increasing healthful eating and physical activity by 2030. APTA applauds the strategy's whole-of-America approach to meet this bold goal and looks forward to working with the administration over the next decade to achieve it.

As an association representing movement experts, our goal is to support physical activity for all by connecting health and health delivery systems to enable people to be physically active within their communities. To achieve this, policymakers, payers, providers, and patients must recognize and remove barriers within the built environment that prevent individuals from engaging in regular physical activity. APTA is encouraged by the administration's commitment to expanding community-level policies that connect pedestrians, bicycle, and transit opportunities to everyday destinations. We agree that the infrastructure in many communities nationwide is not conducive to active forms of transportation. Therefore, APTA applauds the administration's investment in local, community-wide infrastructure that makes active transportation safe and enjoyable. Likewise, APTA also praises the administration's dedication to increasing the number of individuals who have access to a green environment. Nature-deprived communities face significantly reduced access to recreational forms of physical activity. By restoring parks within disadvantaged communities and providing children with free admission to federal lands and waters, recreational forms of physical activity will be more accessible and equitably distributed across the nation.

Dually, APTA supports higher levels of physical activity education and promotion. As movement experts, physical therapists are uniquely qualified to increase awareness of the benefits of physical activity and to measure levels of physical activity of individuals of all ages. PTs are trained to integrate the scientific

principles of movement, function, and exercise progression to promote physical activity and improve health outcomes for individuals and populations across the lifespan. In fact, physical therapists have extensive expertise in physical activity; they understand that optimizing physical activity for health is more than just participating in a form of exercise. At the root of our profession, PTs teach people how to safely incorporate physical activity exercises into their lifestyles and motivate patients to make lifestyle modifications that prevent, treat, and manage chronic diseases. Physical activity, when directed by a PT, can enable patients to take control of their cardiovascular health, manage or even prevent diabetes, maintain a healthy weight, and manage or even prevent hypertension, all of which can have a lasting impact on their overall health and well-being. Given the benefits of physical activity, APTA commends the administration for committing to providing regular updates to the Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans.

Because of the numerous benefits of physical activity prescribed by a physical therapist, PTs provide patient-specific recommendations and focus on developing plans of care that meet the varying needs of each individual. Given the unique complexities of each patient, PTs appreciate the need for tailored physical activity campaigns for specific demographic groups, as different populations may experience higher rates of inactivity or have more limited access to environments that promote physical activity. In this, APTA applauds the administration for actively seeking out ways to promote evidence-based communication strategies, particularly for underserved populations. In fact, over the past year, APTA has launched a consumer awareness campaign, “Choose to Move,” that set out to increase rates of regular physical activity by raising awareness about physical therapists' unique value as movement experts and the benefits of regular physical activity. One major goal of this campaign was to increase the diversity of people reporting regular physical activity. Accordingly, the campaign encouraged Americans of all ages and abilities to embrace active lifestyles and choose a physical therapist that can meet their needs and goals. Choose to Move has reached an audience of 150 major television/cable networks, 2,000 local TV affiliates, and 1,000 local radio stations. The campaign has reached individuals within 30 states, with over 63 million impressions since April 2021.

APTA's commitment to physical activity goes beyond our profession and is evident in our workplace values. As an employer, APTA has designed, built, and activated a workspace where association employees and our guests can easily make healthy choices and choose movement throughout the day. Our headquarters, APTA Centennial Center, has been designated a Fitwel 3-star-certified building, which recognizes how a space encourages fitness, social equity, and other factors that lead to a healthier workplace. APTA Centennial Center features exposed stairways that encourage physical activity within the building and strategically placed placards throughout the office that remind employees to use the stairs if they are able. Likewise, our facility also boasts a free, accessible gym for staff members and a “Flex space” where we host group exercise and wellness classes administered by local health and fitness experts. Our building also includes lockers, indoor bike parking, and rentable bikes that employees use to pick up their lunches or get active during work breaks. APTA also encourages active forms of transportation to and from work by providing employees with a monthly reimbursement for public transit expenses. And coming in late 2022, our neighborhood, Potomac Yard, will have a new Metro station one stop from Reagan National Airport, making our building that much more accessible to our members and employees alike. All of these amenities demonstrate APTA's commitment as an employer to creating an accessible, movement-centric workspace.

And as much as we invest in our profession and employees, we also seek to invest in our local community. As such, we often use our space to hold events in Alexandria, Virginia; our building's adjoining public plaza makes it easy to welcome the community onto our grounds. Recently, we held our first annual 5K, where member physical therapists and physical therapist assistants, employees, and our neighbors gathered to promote exercise and celebrate physical activity. Inherent within our mission is a dedication to building community and advancing the health of society, and we strive to have our work reflect that.

As APTA's values are greatly aligned with the White House's national strategy, we appreciate the Biden-Harris administration's commitment to encouraging physical activity and supporting health equity. As a nonprofit organization, APTA will continue to partner with the private sector and federal, state, and local governments to create alliances that promote physical activity within communities across the nation. Currently, we play a dynamic role in the Physical Activity Alliance, a group of stakeholders that set out to collaboratively activate the policies and systems that help make the active choice the easy choice. APTA plans to leverage this platform to be a powerful voice for physical activity, moving us closer as a nation to reaching health equity in physical fitness. Our first step in this commitment will be signing the CEO Pledge for Physical Activity, a social movement to make physical activity and healthy movement a cultural norm in the workplace that aligns with both the National Physical Activity Plan and the White House National Strategy. Through initiatives like these, APTA looks forward to working with the administration to help achieve our goal of ending hunger nationally and reducing the burden of nutrition-related chronic diseases by 2030. If you wish to speak to a member of our staff on how we value and promote physical activity, please contact Rachel Miller, health policy and payment specialist, at rachellmiller@apta.org or Kate W. Gilliard, director, health policy and payment, at kategilliard@apta.org.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Roger Herr". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Roger Herr, PT, MPA
President