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Projected $271 Million in Cost-Savings to Medicare and Improved Patient Access Addressed in Bipartisan Legislation

Changing Supervision Requirements Will Reduce Administrative Burden and Provide Flexibility in the Delivery of Therapy Services

Alexandria, VA – Sens. Carper, D-Del., and Barrasso, R-Wyo., have introduced APTA-supported bipartisan legislation (Senate Bill 5) that would bring supervision requirements of physical therapist assistants and occupational therapy assistants under Medicare Part B in private therapist practices, in line with state licensure laws, as well as all other settings where Medicare beneficiaries receive therapy services. If enacted, the change would take effect on July 1, 2023.

“The American Physical Therapy Association is grateful to Sens. Carper and Barrasso for their leadership on this bipartisan legislation to improve patient access to therapy services, especially in rural and underserved areas,” said APTA President Roger Herr, PT, MPA.

By standardizing the supervision requirement to general supervision under Medicare across all settings, Congress could make therapy services more accessible to millions of Americans experiencing challenges accessing these services in rural or underserved areas, where beneficiaries are 50% more likely than those in other areas to receive therapy from an OTA or PTA.

“Altering the supervision requirement allows physical therapist assistants to practice at the top of their license, recognizing the valuable role they play in the health care system and providing critical support to therapy clinics," Herr added.

Standardizing general supervision requirements for private outpatient practices under Medicare Part B would align with the 49-state physical therapy licensure laws that allow for general supervision. The change is cost-effective and would reduce administrative burden while implementing common-sense consistency with state laws and across all other Medicare settings.

The results of an independent, non-partisan study commissioned by a coalition of health care provider groups show that Medicare could save up to $271 million over 10 years by making this change to general supervision.

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The American Physical Therapy Association represents 100,000 physical therapists, physical therapist assistants, and physical therapy students nationwide. Visit apta.org to learn more.