

OPPOSITION TO PHYSICIAN OWNERSHIP OF PHYSICAL THERAPIST SERVICES AND SELF-REFERRAL BY PHYSICIANS HOD P06-19-16-46 [Initial: HOD P06-03-27-25;] [Previously Titled: Opposition to Physician Ownership of Physical Therapy Services] [Position]

Whereas, The American Physical Therapy Association advocates for a healthy society, for patient and client engagement in health services, and for direct access to physical therapist services;

Whereas, Physical therapists and physicians collaboratively provide patient-centered services in practice models that may include mutual referral, co-management, and consultation;

Whereas, Physician self-referral to physical therapist services in which an ownership interest by the physician is an avoidable conflict of interest that may restrain patient choice in services;

Whereas, Federal law prohibits, with some exceptions, physician self-referral for various designated health services¹;

Whereas, Evidence suggests that there is greater cost per patient encounter and for the entire episode of care in self-referral situations²; and

Whereas, Evidence also suggests that patients in self-referral situations receive more passive treatment that is performed by persons not licensed as physical therapists and that non-self-referred physical therapist services include more active, hands-on, and one-to-one services that promote greater patient independence and a return to performing routine activities without pain³;

Resolved, That the American Physical Therapy Association opposes ownership of and self-referral to physical therapist services by physicians, and supports federal and state laws and regulations that prohibit physician ownership of physical therapist services.

REFERENCES

1. Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services. Physician Self-Referral webpage. <https://www.cms.gov/medicare/fraud-and-abuse/physicianselfreferral/index.html>.
2. Mitchell J, Reschovsky J, Franzini L., et al. Physician Self-Referral of Physical Therapy Services for Patients with Low Back Pain: Implications for Use, Types of Treatments Received and Expenditures. *Forum for Health Economics and Policy*, 2015;19(2):179-199. doi:10.1515/fhep-2015-0026.
3. Mitchell JM, Reschovsky JD, Reicherter EA. Use of Physical Therapy Following Total Knee Replacement Surgery: Implications of Orthopedic Surgeons' Ownership of Physical Therapy Services. *Health Serv Res*, 2016;51: 1838-1857. doi:10.1111/1475-6773.12465.

Explanation of Reference Numbers:

HOD P00-00-00-00 stands for House of Delegates/**month**/**year**/**page**/**vote** in the House of Delegates minutes; the "P" indicates that it is a position (see below). For example, HOD P06-17-05-04 means that this position can be found in the June 2017 House of Delegates minutes on Page 5 and that it was Vote 4.

P: Position | S: Standard | G: Guideline | Y: Policy | R: Procedure