APTA and PAHO form new partnership to strengthen rehabilitation services in the Americas

ALEXANDRIA, VA, / Washington, DC, March 04, 2019 — The American Physical Therapy Association (APTA) and the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) have partnered to identify key actions that will strengthen countries’ disability and rehabilitation services in the Americas.

This collaboration will allow APTA and PAHO to collect data on steps taken by countries within the region to ensure and improve access to health and rehabilitation services for all who need them, including people with disabilities. The work is based on the PAHO Plan of Action on Disabilities and Rehabilitation approved by the Directing Council of the PAHO in 2014.

The agreement was developed under the APTA Partnerships program, which seeks to enhance relationships and develop mutually beneficial partnerships with organizations that share common goals. The program allows APTA to extend its reach in advancing the profession of physical therapy. As APTA is one of the largest national professional associations of physical therapists in the world, this partnership will significantly extend the reach of PAHO’s efforts in the rehab services arena and increase the potential for achieving meaningful impact.

An estimated 150 million people in the western hemisphere live with a disability, based on WHO prevalence estimations. In Latin America and the Caribbean, the most common impairment is visual, followed by mobility and hearing. Rehabilitation services are extremely limited in many countries across this region.
“APTA has been working to build and strengthen relationships that can be leveraged strategically to benefit health care. We’ve also been exploring ways to expand our activities related to global health and international development, and to promote to our members the importance of these issues,” said APTA CEO Justin Moore, PT, DPT. “Our vision to transform society by optimizing movement to improve the human experience is well aligned with PAHO’s plan. They are an ideal partner for us.”

“Rehabilitation is an increasingly important health service for the region, particularly for older populations and those who have experienced an injury or noncommunicable disease or for many with long or short-term impairments” said PAHO Director Carissa F. Etienne. “This is an important partnership for PAHO as we look to strengthen rehabilitation services in the Americas.”

The Pan American Health Organization works with the countries of the Americas to improve the health and quality of life of their populations. Founded in 1902, it is the world’s oldest international public health agency. It serves as the Regional Office of the World Health Organization (WHO) for the Americas and is the specialized health agency of the Inter-American System.

The American Physical Therapy Association represents more than 100,000 physical therapists, physical therapist assistants, and students of physical therapy nationwide. Visit MoveForwardPT.com to learn more about the types of conditions physical therapists treat, and find a physical therapist in your area.

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