

NATIONAL
PHYSIOTHERAPY
MONTH 2024:

**CPA MEMBERS
CAMPAIGN KIT**



Canadian
Physiotherapy
Association

Association
canadienne de
physiothérapie

KEY MESSAGES ON THE **ECONOMIC IMPACT** OF PHYSIOTHERAPY IN CANADA REPORT

Based on the findings of *Deloitte's Economic Impact of Physiotherapy in Canada Report*, here are key messages for government and external stakeholders:

- 1 Physiotherapy reduces the economic burden of illness:** Illness costs the Canadian economy **\$235 billion per year**. Deloitte's report shows that physiotherapy is already reducing the burden of illness in Canada by **\$232 million per year**. This is achieved through direct cost savings to the healthcare system and indirect savings related to helping workers stay in the workforce.
- 2 Canada can save the healthcare system millions by increasing access to physiotherapy:** By bringing more physiotherapists into our health systems, we can further reduce the burden of diseases such as **osteoarthritis, back pain, and coronary heart disease** by an additional **\$144 million per year**.
- 3 But we need more physiotherapists to do it: 15% of Canadians receive physiotherapy services each year.** Yet, Canada is lagging behind our counterparts. To reach the OECD average, Canada would need to increase the number of practicing **physiotherapists by 62%**.
- 4 Physiotherapy is cost-effective for Canadians:** Deloitte says that physiotherapy is not only an effective healthcare solution but also **cost-effective**. This helps keep costs down and redirect them to where they can have the most impact.



KEY ASKS OF GOVERNMENT

Canadians need action to support our positive impact on the healthcare system. The Government of Canada can do this by:

- Supporting physiotherapy by amplifying messages about the positive cost-savings their expertise has on the healthcare system.
- Working and collaborating with the physiotherapy profession and organizations across the country. This includes more seats will need to be funded at existing university physiotherapy programs, and that Canada must credential more internationally educated physiotherapists.
- Working with its provincial and territorial counterparts to dismantle barriers that inhibit physiotherapists from practicing their full scope across the country.

THE CPA'S MODEST REQUEST

- Would you work with your provincial government to encourage them to dismantle barriers that stop physiotherapists from practicing their full scope in Canada?
- Would you encourage the federal government, including the federal Health Minister, to do the same when meeting with the provinces and territories?



KEY MESSAGES ON THE PHYSIOTHERAPY SCOPE OF PRACTICE: OPTIMIZING CARE FOR PEOPLE IN CANADA REPORT

Based on the *Physiotherapy Scope of Practice: Optimizing Care for People in Canada* report, the following key messages can be shared with government and external stakeholders:

- 1 Canada should enable physiotherapists to practice their full potential:** There is significant value in enabling physiotherapists to work to the full extent of their knowledge, skills, and training.
- 2 However, there are variances across jurisdictions:** Different provinces allow physiotherapists to do different things in their healthcare systems. This means a physiotherapist with the same training in one province may be able to do more for their patient than a physiotherapist in another. These variances can impact individuals seeking care, labour mobility, and healthcare system optimization.
- 3 Optimizing scope allows Canadians to access better and faster healthcare:** Optimizing the scope of physiotherapy practice leads to improved access to healthcare, especially in rural areas. It also means faster referrals to specialists, reduced wait times for diagnostic imaging tests, and better clinical outcomes for patients. As the profession continues to evolve, physiotherapists are moving into advanced practice roles, demonstrating the positive impact they can have on increasing capacity in the health system.
- 4 We can't achieve optimized scope without all levels of government on board:** Our report on the scope of practice for physiotherapists highlights the need for legislation, regulation, and funding policies to keep pace with the evolution of the profession, so that the full value of physiotherapy can be delivered in the Canadian healthcare system.



KEY ASKS OF GOVERNMENT

Canadians need action to support our positive impact on the healthcare system, which will lead to better health outcomes. The Government of Canada can do this by:

- Working with its provincial and territorial counterparts to dismantle barriers that inhibit physiotherapists from practicing their full scope across the country. This would enable physiotherapists to deliver timely, effective, and optimal care for all, reducing the burden on the healthcare system and providing better outcomes for Canadians.
- Federal elected officials can also collaborate with their provincial counterparts to standardize both licensing and scope of practice across the country. We urge you to commit today to pushing for this needed change.

THE CPA'S MODEST REQUEST

- Would you work with your provincial government to encourage them to dismantle barriers that stop physiotherapists from practicing their full scope in Canada?
- Would you encourage the federal government, including the federal Health Minister, to do the same when meeting with the provinces and territories?



FURTHER BACKGROUND MATERIAL:

BARRIERS TO HARMONIZED PHYSIOTHERAPY SCOPE OF PRACTICE IN CANADA

(FOR MEMBERS IN PREPARATION OF MEETINGS)

- **Imaging:** The ability for physiotherapists to order diagnostic imaging (x-ray, MRI and ultrasound) is enabled in some jurisdictions in Canada, and not in others.
 - For example, in Alberta[1], Physiotherapists are eligible to seek authorization to order the following forms of ionizing or non-ionizing radiation (according to legislation, physiotherapists may only order diagnostic images if they have received authorization from the Registrar to do so):
 - X-rays
 - Magnetic resonance imaging
 - Ultrasound imaging
 - A recent change in Nova Scotia[2] will mean that licensed physiotherapists in that province will soon be able to request X-rays, which will result in saving patients time and unnecessary additional appointments. While physiotherapists employed in Nova Scotia Health or IWK can already make this request, physiotherapists working in private practice will also be able to request X-rays in the spring of 2024.
 - In Ontario, all legislation has been passed and proclaimed regarding physiotherapists ordering imaging; however, implementation is pending an enabling regulation[3]. Ordering diagnostic imaging, including X-rays, and ordering laboratory tests are being performed under delegation in the interim.
- **Ability to refer to other health professionals, including referring to physician specialists:** The ability for physiotherapists to refer to specialists varies across Canadian jurisdictions, and is not applied or implemented consistently where it is permitted in legislation. Alberta allows for referral to specialists, as does New Brunswick, Quebec, and PEI. Nova Scotia does not place limits on who physiotherapists can refer to. However, in all these cases, there is inconsistency in which professions will accept referrals from physiotherapists.

- **Direct access without the need for a referral:** Across Canada, the current regulated health professional legislation in all jurisdictions enables access to physiotherapists as direct access or ‘first contact’ professionals without the requirement for a referral (from a physician or nurse practitioner, for example). However, in some case law, regulations or policies outside of the regulated health professional legislation may impact direct access to physiotherapy and represent barriers to the full scope of the profession.
 - For example, people in Ontario can access physiotherapy services directly without the need for a physician referral. However, in some circumstances, such as publicly funded Community Physiotherapy Clinics or some extended health insurance plans, a physician or nurse practitioner referral is required to access funding[4].

CITATIONS

[1] College of Physiotherapists of Alberta. (2024). Public funding for diagnostic imaging ordered by physiotherapists. Retrieved online <https://www.cpta.ab.ca/news-and-updates/news/public-funding-for-diagnostic-imaging-ordered-by-physiotherapists/>

[2] Nova Scotia Health. (8 February 2024). Physiotherapists across Nova Scotia will soon be able to request X-rays. Retrieved online <https://www.nshealth.ca/news-and-notice/physiotherapists-across-nova-scotia-will-soon-be-able-request-x-rays>

[3] Ontario Physiotherapy Association. (8 August 2022). Letter to the Honourable Sylvia Jones. Retrieved online <https://opa.on.ca/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/OPA-Letter-to-Minister-of-Health-August-8-2022.pdf>

[4] Ontario Physiotherapy Association. (2024). Access & Payment: How do I access physiotherapy? Retrieved online <https://opa.on.ca/about-physiotherapy/access-payment/>



AMALGAMATED KEY MESSAGES FOR THE PHYSIOTHERAPY SCOPE OF PRACTICE & THE ECONOMIC IMPACT ANALYSIS DELOITTE REPORT

Based on the *Physiotherapy Scope of Practice: Optimizing Care for People in Canada* report and the economic impact analysis prepared by Deloitte, the following key messages can be shared with government and external stakeholders:

- 1 The role of physiotherapists in Canada is crucial:** Physiotherapists play a crucial role in healthcare, offering a wide range of services from assessment and diagnosis to treatment and prevention of various physical conditions. However, there are currently variances in the scope of practice for physiotherapists across provinces and territories. These variances can impact individuals seeking care, labour mobility, and our ability to optimize the healthcare system.
- 2 Canada has a real opportunity to improve the effectiveness of our healthcare system by enabling physiotherapists to practice their full scope:** There is significant value in enabling physiotherapists to work to the full extent of their knowledge, skills, and training. Physiotherapists working up to their full scope of practice across the country means better outcomes for Canadians and for the healthcare system.
- 3 Physiotherapy is cost-effective and is saving the healthcare system millions each year:** Physiotherapy interventions are cost-effective and provide a high return on investment, leading to greater health and economic benefits. The current economic burden of illness on the Canadian economy is **\$235 billion per year**. This is significant as Deloitte's report shows that physiotherapy is already reducing the burden of illness in Canada by **\$232 million per year**. This is achieved through direct savings to the healthcare system and indirect savings related to helping workers stay in the workforce. By enabling physiotherapists to utilize their full scope of practice, we can reduce the burden on the healthcare system even more.



- 4 Optimizing the scope of practice for physiotherapists in Canada can save the healthcare system millions:** Deloitte’s report found that by expanding the supply of physiotherapy in Canada, there is potential to further reduce the burden of diseases such as osteoarthritis, back pain, and coronary heart disease by an additional **\$144 million per year**. Additionally, optimizing the scope of practice for physiotherapy leads to improved access to healthcare, especially in rural areas. It also means faster referrals to specialists, reduced wait times for diagnostic imaging tests, and overall better outcomes for patients.

- 5 Call to Action:** Physiotherapists are asking decision-makers of all jurisdictions in Canada to remove barriers preventing physiotherapists from working to their full scope. These actions may harness our potential to save the healthcare system millions of dollars each year and improving health outcomes for Canadians.



FEDERAL MEETINGS

BEST PRACTICES

Meeting with Members of Parliament offers you an important opportunity to ask for action for physiotherapists. Below outlines our recommendations for you in conducting these meetings, alongside some things to avoid, to help you advocate effectively.

RECOMMENDED:

- **Review the key messages in advance.** Think about how they connect with your own work so that you can raise real-life examples.
- **Log in on time.** We recommend joining the meeting 5 minutes before it begins to ensure you are not having technical issues.
- **Dive right into the conversation.** 30-minute meetings go by quickly!
- **Take down a few notes,** including any requests for follow-up from the MP. Send a debrief of how your meeting went to Kayla at the CPA.
- **Share your experience and expertise.** Provide stories and speak to your experience, skills, and expertise where it makes sense in your conversation.
- **If you do not know the answer to their question, offer to have CPA follow-up rather than guessing.** We want to provide MPs with accurate information. Instead of guessing if you don't know the answer, you can address how CPA will follow up with them with information regarding their questions.
- **Learn more about the Member of Parliament before the meeting.** Please ensure to read the biography for the MP you are meeting with. You can also learn more about them by viewing the following links:
 - <https://www.ourcommons.ca/Members/en>
 - <https://openparliament.ca/>
- Thank the MP for their time and enjoy the discussion!

FEDERAL MEETINGS

BEST PRACTICES

NOT RECOMMENDED:

- **Focusing on the political affiliation of the MP.** Believe it or not, MPs across all parties care about a strong healthcare system. Stay positive and encourage them to take action instead!
- **Strongly disagree or engage in conflict.** We want the meetings with MPs to be a positive experience for all. Strongly disagreeing with their opinion or engaging in an argument will not result in tangible action for physiotherapists.
- **Leaving your camera off.** Speaking face-to-face is always best and helps them understand the human side of the policy.
- **Having other screens open.** Your MP has shared their time with you, and you've taken the time to have this meeting. Make it worth it without distraction!
- **Getting off-topic.** It happens (MPs are talkative and questions can take you on tangents) but if that happens, try to get the meeting focused back on NPM.



VIDEO SCRIPT FOR SOCIAL MEDIA (FOR MEMBERS)

Hi everyone – my name is **INSERT NAME**, and I am an **INSERT TITLE** in **INSERT PROVINCE**.

May is National Physiotherapy Month, and this year we are excited to share with you how physiotherapy is for everyone. As physiotherapists, we are urging decision-makers, including our federal Members of Parliament, to take action that will save the healthcare system millions and unlock the potential of physios across the country.

A recent report on physiotherapy shows that we are already saving the healthcare system in Canada \$232 million each year. How? Well, physiotherapy leads to direct savings to the healthcare system and helps the economy by letting workers stay in the workforce. This is so important at a time where the healthcare system is overburdened.

To ensure that physios can practice to their full potential and save the healthcare system millions more, we urge governments to optimize the scope of practice for physiotherapists across Canada.

Right now, different provinces allow physiotherapists to do different things in their healthcare systems. It means a physiotherapist with the same training in one province may be able to do more for their patient than a physiotherapist in another. If federal and provincial leaders work together to embrace the full potential of physiotherapy in Canada, we can help ease that burden on doctors and nurses while saving the healthcare system millions.

If you're with us and want to see action – comment below and share this video! We need to get the word out that physiotherapy is for everyone, and we need to practice our full scope. You can also visit [physiotherapy.ca](https://www.physiotherapy.ca) to learn more about the National Physiotherapy Month and how you can help us.

Thank you for your support.

Social media hashtags: #NPM2024 #MNP2024

TEMPLATE LETTER TO FEDERAL MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT



LETTER TEMPLATE CAN BE FOUND IN YOUR NPM KIT
[FIND YOUR MP HERE](#)

Dear [\[insert name\]](#),

I am reaching out as a **constituent** from your riding and my postal code is [\[insert postal code\]](#). May marks National Physiotherapy Month, and this month serves as a reminder that **physiotherapy is for everyone**.

The Canadian Physiotherapy Association (CPA) is committed to optimizing the scope of physiotherapy across Canada. As a physiotherapist in your province, I see firsthand how an increase in optimized scope could mean better health outcomes for people in my community and substantial savings to our healthcare system.

Right now, different provinces allow physiotherapists to do different things in their healthcare systems. It means a physiotherapist with the same training in one province may be able to do more for their patient than a physiotherapist in another. The federal government can be a leader in working together with provinces to optimize scope of practice across the country.

Deloitte's recent report on physiotherapy underscores this potential. It reveals that physiotherapy is already **reducing the burden of illness in Canada by \$232 million per year**. These savings are through direct cost savings to the health care system and indirect savings related to helping workers stay in the workforce. Furthermore, by increasing the number of practicing physiotherapists by 62% to reach the OECD average, we can further alleviate the burden of diseases such as osteoarthritis, back pain, and coronary heart disease by **an additional \$144 million per year**.

Despite these promising findings, our expertise is not being fully utilized across the country. By enabling physiotherapists to practice their full scope, we can improve access to healthcare across the country and save the healthcare system millions. Will you commit today to advocating for physiotherapists in Canada to practice their full scope?

As we mark **National Physiotherapy Month**, I call upon you to support our profession and help us deliver better healthcare to Canadians while saving millions for our healthcare system.

Sincerely,

[\[Your Name\]](#)

TIP: We encourage you to send this letter to your MP only during the **LAST WEEK OF MAY**.