



Open letter to providers of extended health benefits programs

To whom it may concern:

The Canadian Physiotherapy Association (CPA) represents over 14000 physiotherapists (PT), physiotherapist assistants (PTA) and students across Canada. We believe that every Canadian should have access to the quality health care they need, including physiotherapy, when they need it and as close to home as possible.

In the past few years, CPA is aware of growing concerns and misunderstandings about the role of PTA's in the delivery of quality, evidence-based physiotherapy services. In some cases, these misunderstandings have led to denied reimbursement for claimants from their extended health benefit providers when the care that they have received involved intervention by a PTA working with a PT. Patients are concerned that they won't be able to access the care they need. PT's are also concerned that there will be no choice but to stop employing PTA's to participate in the delivery of quality services decreasing the capacity of clinics to see patients and to control cost of care.

Over the last 15 years, the model of care in many hospitals, rehabilitation centres and private clinics has evolved to include the addition of PTA's as extenders of physiotherapy. PTA's are assigned tasks and work under the close supervision of PT's, in keeping with the regulatory colleges' Standards of Care. The addition of PTAs to the care-model is intended to increase access, safety, and efficiency, while allowing the continued provision of high-quality, effective care.

According to both the national Physiotherapist and Physiotherapist Assistant Essential Competency documents (<https://physiotherapy.ca/essentialcompetency-profile>), PT's are always responsible for completing all assessments and reassessments, as well as designing and progressing all treatment plans. Parts of the plan can be assigned to trained PTA's who are competent to provide that care under supervision- however it is the PT that remains responsible for all of the treatment provided. The treatment remains the responsibility of the PT and is still considered part of the whole physiotherapy program, regardless as to whether a portion has been assigned to a PTA.

CPA recognizes PTAs as qualified extenders and an important part of the evolving model of care in a marketplace that is challenged by increasing costs. As such, services whether provided by a PT or PTA under direction of a PT should be treated the same and both be eligible for reimbursement under extended health benefits plans. Doing so will ensure that patients can access care when and where they need it.

We understand that what is included and covered in a benefit plan is a decision between the plan sponsor and the benefit provider. We do believe that for the most part these decisions are based on ensuring that those covered by these plans can access cost-efficient, quality care that returns or keeps them at work, school or other activities of daily life. Models of care that include PTA's, working as appropriate extenders of PT's in keeping with the regulatory standards and best practices, are an important part of achieving these goals.

The CPA provides resources, education and assistance to the public and to funders to ensure that Canadians have access to quality physiotherapy services. We would be pleased to meet with you to further discuss the role of PTA's in the delivery of services to your clients.

For further information, please contact information@physiotherapy.ca

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Brad Brookman', written in a cursive style.

Brad Brookman
Chief Executive Officer