

# DIRECT ACCESS TO A PHYSICAL THERAPIST TALKING POINTS

**DIRECT CONSUMER ACCESS** – The requested change in the PT Practice Act is to allow access to a Physical Therapist for treatment without requiring a physician referral:

- 1) **ACCESSIBILITY-** Passage of a direct consumer access bill will allow consumers the choice of using a Physical Therapist as an entry point into the health care system for receiving **physical therapy services**. 43 states currently allow some form of consumer access for physical therapy treatment. Direct access will improve consumer access into the medical model, especially when access and intervention is slowed or limited (Rural health care, schools, industry, prevention-fitness-health and wellness).
- 2) **AFFORDABILITY-** Direct consumer access reduces health care costs to consumer/third party payers because earlier intervention decreases recovery time and chronicity of symptoms. (Mitchell Study, PT Journal, 1/97) Additionally, this bill would have no impact on third party reimbursement requirements for physical therapy services.
- 3) **ACCOUNTABILITY-** Physical Therapists are currently allowed by statute to determine a diagnosis solely for physical therapy and required by law to “refer patients to other health care providers if symptoms are present for which physical therapy treatment is inadvisable or if symptoms indicate conditions for which treatment is outside the scope of knowledge of the licensed physical therapist” K.S.A. 65-2912(a)(7). Additionally, liability insurers report that there is no difference in liability claims or insurance premiums between direct access states and non-direct access states.
- 4) **NO CHANGE IN THE SCOPE OF PHYSICAL THERAPY PRACTICE-** This bill would not change any aspect of the current physical therapy scope of practice. We would practice physical therapy as it is defined in current statutes. This bill is only about consumer access to a physical therapist for treatment. There is no documented evidence of public harm in states with Direct Consumer Access.