

Private Practice Physical Therapists

Small business professionals restoring function to America - one patient at a time.

SUPPORT ACCESS TO PHYSICAL THERAPY IN COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTERS

RECOMMENDATION: PPS urges Congress to pass the *Primary Health Services Enhancement Act (H.R.5365)* which would enable Rural Health Clinics and Federally Qualified Health Centers to offer physical therapy services to Medicare and Medicaid beneficiaries.

Physical therapists specialize in providing neuromusculoskeletal interventions and should be the point of entry for the treatment of movement disorders as well as rehabilitation and pain management. Private practice physical therapists provide patients with access to safe, cost-effective physical therapy in outpatient settings while also supporting their local economy by operating small business in the heart of their communities. As small business owners, they are eager to provide good jobs while seeking ways to improve the health, well-being, physical function, and quality of life of members of their community.

BACKGROUND:

Over 30 million people—nearly 3 million of whom are Medicare beneficiaries—receive their primary care services in one of 13,000 rural health clinics or federally qualified health centers (also known as community health centers or CHCs) in America. These community-based facilities provide access to essential health services while also reducing barriers to care such as cost, distance, and insurance. CHCs currently offer a range of health care services such as primary care, internal medicine, behavioral health care, dental care, emergency medical services, and clinical laboratory services which are provided by physicians, advanced practice nurses, and dentists.

Despite the intent to provide comprehensive public health services, there remains a gap in the types of services that are readily available to CHC patients. The *Primary Health Services Enhancement Act (H.R.5365)* would address the problem by providing an avenue through which patients could access physical therapy services. H.R.5365 would enable independent physical therapists to provide care to Medicare and Medicaid beneficiaries who are CHC patients. This legislative fix would improve patient access while also supporting private practice physical therapists who are seeking to expand their practice to better meet the needs of their community.

The bipartisan *Primary Health Services Enhancement Act (H.R.5365)*

- Enables private practice physical therapists to contract with a CHC to provide care to vulnerable Medicare and Medicaid beneficiaries.
- Empowers independent, community-based physical therapists to provide care in a CHC setting; Medicare or Medicaid federal health plans would cover this care.
- Reduces barriers that vulnerable patients face when attempting to access necessary physical therapy care.
- Supports public health and CHC goals of providing vulnerable communities with access to comprehensive primary care services.

To cosponsor H.R.5365, please contact Olivia Kirchberg (Olivia.Kirchberg@mail.house.gov) in the office of Rep. Ron Kind.