

Murdo, Patricia

From: Keith Ori [kori@orthopedicrehabinc.com]
Sent: Wednesday, August 18, 2010 1:33 PM
To: Keck, Jerry
Cc: Murdo, Patricia
Subject: PT reimbursement rates
Attachments: image001.gif; image002.png

Mr. Jerry Keck
Ms. Pat Murdo

Dept of Labor and Industry

Dear Mr. Keck and Ms. Murdo:

I have been notified of the meeting tomorrow of the Economic Affairs Committee regarding the comprehensive work comp reform package that will result in a decrease in Physical Therapy reimbursement. I am currently a member of the reimbursement committee for the Montana Chapter of the APTA and we would like to go on record as opposing this reduction in fees in its relationship to current Medicare reimbursement rates.

During the 2008 legislative session and with your support, work comp fees were finally increased for physical therapists across the state. There is no more important health care service that produces positive results for getting MT workers back on the job. We were so poorly paid for a decade that it was a justifiable increase that is now being placed on the cutting block.

The question has been posed that if PT's are willing to accept Medicare fees then why wouldn't we accept fees from Work Comp that are equal to or somewhat higher. An important consideration in that process is that when physical therapists, like myself, signed up for Medicare we had no idea that we would not be able to ever opt out of that program. Physicians are leaving Medicare in droves because they can opt out. In today's current reimbursement climate, our four offices would opt out of Medicare if we could because of the annual threat of reimbursement cuts from the federal government and to add to this, the recent proposal to drop Medicare fees by another 25-30% would make this decision even easier. If work comp chooses to follow in these footsteps I am quite sure that some providers will cease providing some services that are currently provided. Dept of Labor and Industry is taking a step backwards with this policy consideration not only for physical therapists but for medical providers throughout the state. I can remember quite clearly how many physicians and physical therapists despised working with the old system because of dismal reimbursement..

Physical therapists deserve the current reimbursement because of the volumes of paperwork, treatment authorizations and challenges presented by the current system. Re-pricing errors, legal correspondence, paper billing and the administrative costs that require staffing, are currently burdensome and costly. Not to mention the additional reductions with silent and other PPO companies that reduce our fees even further. Physical therapists across the state have partnerships with local employers to aide in rapid return to work programs and those services are in jeopardy should these reductions take place.

I believe the most important factor that Montana physical therapists would be concerned with is setting up a fee schedule that is in any shape or form compared to Medicare. With proposed, drastic cuts in the Medicare program, this would leave us in a unpredictable and erratic reimbursement environment. I am sure there are other fee schedules that could be used for comparisons that would promote fairness across the board.

Our committee is willing to work with you, so please contact us if we can assist in any way.

Sincerely,

Keith Ori, PT



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111 Sunnyview Lane, Suite B
Kalispell, MT 59901
kori@orthopedicrehabinc.com
406 752-3597 Fax: 406 756-7605

With Offices in Kalispell, Columbia Falls and Whitefish

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