



Members of the Arizona Physical Therapy Association:

My name is Brian Schmitz, President of the Arizona Physical Therapy Association. I wanted to provide you a brief update of Association matters following the Council of Chapter Presidents and Component Leaders meeting on March 17th. Sharon Dunn, President of APTA, stated in her address, "Adversity does not build character, it reveals it." I want to personally thank and recognize the countless Physical Therapist and Physical Therapist Assistants who better their communities and provide services during this time of crisis. Whether you have continued to work or made a conscious decision to limit exposure in your community, I know the decision was made with the best interests of patients and clients in mind.

There are still high levels of uncertainty regarding Patient Care and Practice Management in light of the Coronavirus pandemic. It is important to have access to accurate information. Please refer to the following websites for materials and resources:

apta.org/coronavirus

cdc.gov/coronavirus.

azdhs.gov/coronavirus.

A couple of additional updates for our Arizona members:

APTA National has suspended in-person meetings and business travel through April 15th. The Arizona Physical Therapy Association will follow APTA Guidelines, and all in-person Association meetings will be suspended until further notice.

HB2536 Telemedicine bill passed the House and Senate Health Committee but has not yet been voted on by the Senate, and it is unknown whether or not it will be heard before State Legislators recess due to the Coronavirus pandemic. The State Governmental Affairs Committee is working diligently on our behalf to advocate for our Telehealth privileges, and we will update you of pertinent changes.

Physical Therapists were NOT included in the expansion of Telehealth providers Federally. CMS did move to allow digital communications by Physical Therapists. The new regulatory waivers will allow PTs, OTs, and SLPs to engage in patient-initiated "e-visits" for purposes of assessment and management services.

Please note, Federal permission to engage in these "e-visits" does not supersede State Practice Acts. Physical Therapists (and OTs, SLPs, ATs, and Audiologists) cannot currently perform telemedicine of any kind in Arizona regardless of what any other entity rules.

APTA considers Physical Therapists to be Essential Providers and would like to place the final determination regarding Patient Care and Practice Management decisions on individual providers.

However, it is still unclear who would make that decision in Arizona, and our State Governmental Affairs Committee is working to clarify this topic.

Private Practice Section has moved its PPS COVID-19 Response page to the public side of their website – see ppsapta.org and click on the banner link. The Private Practice Section is answering questions from members on telehealth, e-visits, insurance coverage changes, employment law, etc. and posting them on the page.

We are committed to providing the most accurate, up to date information available to us as a component. Please understand the information is rapidly evolving, and we will attempt to deliver regular updates to our members. Please do not hesitate to let us know what we can do to assist you during these difficult times. Please remember, we are #BetterTogether.

Best,

Brian Schmitz PT, DPT

President, Arizona Physical Therapy Association