

Jackie Barry

From: PTWA Board of Directors <board@ptwa.org>
Sent: Tuesday, March 24, 2020 10:06 AM
To: Jackie Barry
Subject: Treating PT Patients in a Stay Home, Stay Healthy World

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Dear Jackie

As you are probably aware, Governor Inslee issued a [“Stay Home. Stay Healthy.” order](#) yesterday. The order exempted [“essential workers”](#) from needing to comply with this order. Physical therapists and physical therapist assistants are specifically listed as essential workers in the healthcare workforce. During this crisis, we can offer expertise that not only alleviates acute pain and dysfunction, but can also minimize patient visits to emergency departments and primary care offices, freeing up our medical colleagues and resources for more medically urgent patients.

However, making decisions about treating your patients during the COVID-19 outbreak is not as easy as that. Treating our patients is both a privilege and responsibility and requires us to put them at the center of our service. You must use your clinical judgement to determine if the risk of seeing a patient outweighs the benefit. Will their condition keep them from functioning, cause them to regress and/or end up needing emergency care if you do not treat them? You must weigh the medical factors involved on a patient-by-patient basis, and consider your particular work environment as well. If you choose to see a patient, can you adhere to the “six foot rule,” protecting other patients and staff from inadvertent exposure?

If you do decide to see patients in person you also know you need to take added precautions as we recommended [in our March 19 blog post](#). Some clinics are

screening all employees and patients for fever as they enter the building, in addition to asking them questions regarding their health and the health of those with whom they've come in contact.

We are advocating for increased access to providing care by telehealth and, in addition to [Labor & Industries announcing last Friday that it will allow PT to be delivered via telehealth](#), we hope to have good news about other payers soon.

We also will continue to be in touch and provide resources as this situation evolves.

We value your service to our patients and support your professional judgment. We appreciate you being a member of the PTWA community now more than ever.

Sincerely

PTWA Board of Directors



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