



**Physical Therapists:
Accreditation Standards and Service Provider Guidelines for
Out-Patient and Private Clinic Services**

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Intent

This document sets out physical therapy:

- accreditation standards
- service provider guidelines

Introduction

All physiotherapists providing services to WCB clients will be members in good standing of the Saskatchewan College of Physical Therapists. Physiotherapists will comply with:

- Accreditation standards and service provider guidelines for physical therapists providing out-patient and private clinic services to WCB clients.
- The primary chiropractic and physical therapy soft tissue treatment guidelines (soft tissue guidelines).
- The service fees and fee codes for physical therapists providing out-patient and private clinic services to WCB clients.
- The ethical requirements of the Saskatchewan College of Physical Therapists, the Saskatchewan Physiotherapy Association and the Canadian Physiotherapy Association.
- Current and future WCB policies that pertain to physical therapy. The WCB will notify, via the Saskatchewan Physiotherapy Association (SPA), of specific changes that will affect the provider.
- *The Workers' Compensation Act, 2013* (the Act).

By providing care to WCB clients, physiotherapists implicitly indicate their:

- Understanding of this agreement.
- Willingness to comply with this agreement.

Professional affiliation and WCB accreditation requirements

All physical therapy treatment shall be provided by, or under the supervision of, physiotherapists accredited by the WCB.

Physiotherapists who want to provide care to WCB clients must apply for WCB accreditation.

WCB accreditation ensures that WCB clients receive care from qualified physiotherapists that are independent of adjudication decisions and employer influence. Physiotherapists make decisions regarding continued treatment, return to work and the need for assessment team review, based on objective and documented medical findings.

Physiotherapists must be independent and objective and therefore must refuse to advocate on behalf of employers or workers regarding causation or ongoing benefits. When requested, physiotherapists will remind employers or workers of the WCB's appeals processes and the Fair Practices Office, both of which have access to medical expertise to address any concerns raised.

Physiotherapists will not advertise their affiliation with the WCB.

Practice guidelines

Intake and assessment guidelines

The physiotherapist will send the initial assessment (PTI) report to the WCB within three business days after the WCB client's initial assessment.

Physiotherapists are allowed to treat WCB clients for up to 10 visits after the initial assessment unless they receive notification from the WCB to the contrary.

Treatment will adhere to the soft tissue guidelines. Education and return-to-work efforts must be provided and exercise therapy may be provided.

Once the initial 10 visits are complete and further treatment is required, the Physiotherapist's Progress/Discharge (PTP) report must be submitted to the WCB. The report must include:

- All information regarding the client's physical findings and functional outcome scores.
- The efforts made by the physiotherapist to establish transitional and/or full return to work.

Only after submitting this report may the physiotherapist continue treating the WCB client for another 10 visits.

If further treatment is required after the first extension of treatment, a PTP report must be submitted to the WCB. Only after submitting this report, may the physiotherapist continue treating the WCB client for another 10 visits. At this time, and for every PTP report submitted thereafter, the WCB file manager will request that the WCB physical therapy consultant review the WCB client's progress.

When a physical therapy claim for coverage is denied (following the initial assessment or request for further treatments), the WCB will pay for services up to the date when the therapist was notified that it was denied.

In the event that appropriate reporting is not carried out or the therapist treats beyond the soft tissue guidelines without contacting the WCB's physical therapy consultants and documenting the call on the WCB's progress report or additional treatment note to the WCB, fees may be rescinded.

Only online reporting will be accepted after Jan. 1, 2017.

If a WCB client requests further (recurrent) treatment, but has not attended treatment for more than 30 days at the clinic or if the worker has approached a different clinic for treatment, the WCB will fund an initial assessment and recurrent initial assessment report only, with WCB notifying the clinic if funding for more treatment will be provided.

Physiotherapists must await approval for further treatment once the recurrent PTI form has been submitted. Workers who have received secondary or tertiary treatment within the last 90 days are exempted from this process and should be redirected back to the secondary/tertiary centre for re-evaluation and discussion with the WCB's health services facilitator. This management of recurrent treatment will come into effect when the WCB has developed the Physical Therapy Initial Recurrent (PTIR) form and will be announced by the WCB via the SPA.

The WCB, physiotherapists, employers and workers will ensure services are provided, distributed and funded without any conflict of interest. If the WCB, physiotherapist, employer or worker recognizes or perceives a conflict of interest, all parties are to be provided written notice of the conflict, except the last scenario below. The following are considered to be conflicts of interest:

- Referring workers to physical therapy clinics where the referrer has some aspect of control (e.g., the referrer is an owner, director, officer or stakeholder of the clinic).
- Providing services to workers for work-related injuries without advising the WCB.
- Any officer, director, employee or agent of the physiotherapist approaching WCB personnel to promote the business of the physiotherapist.

Physiotherapists that enter into agreements with employers for the treatment of workers for work-related injuries or have received an employer-based referral or an employer-funded work assignment within the past year will ensure the worker's written consents to treatment acknowledges both that relationship and that the worker is aware he or she may choose

another provider. Consent forms will be signed by the worker for in-clinic assessment/treatment, as well as any worksite assessment/treatment where the worker or therapist feels a work-related injury may have occurred.

Management guidelines

WCB clients will receive care equivalent with the:

- Type and severity of the injury.
- Stages of tissue healing.
- Availability of the worksite to provide therapeutic progressions.

If the WCB client is diagnosed to have a soft tissue injury, the physiotherapist will use the soft tissue treatment guidelines (Schedule A). The soft tissue guidelines may be reviewed during the term of agreement. Once the parties have agreed on the amendments, the amended version will be available to physiotherapists to view via the WCB's website.

Physiotherapists will book a maximum of three clients in an hour. This will ensure:

- adequate time for physical care
- education
- reassurance
- return-to-work discussion

This ratio does not apply to back classes, education classes, conditioning programs, inter-professional conferencing or work-hardening programs.

In programs involving strength training, the staff/client ratio will not exceed one to six. In non-strength training programs (e.g., aerobic exercise), the staff/client ratio will not exceed one to 12.

If the physiotherapist suggests that the services of an exercise therapist that is not part of the credentialed team or a massage therapist are required, the physiotherapist will provide a written referral to the exercise or massage therapist. The exercise or massage therapist will then request authorization to treat the client from the WCB. If the exercise therapist is included as a member of the credentialed team, a written referral is required but an authorization request is not required.

Physiotherapists may invoice 1.25 units of care per week as individual instruction per week; time spent with the injured worker after that time is billed using group fee codes, though the

worker may be the sole attendee. If there are special circumstances necessitating more one on one care (e.g., cognitive impairment), more individual time may be billed with pre-discussion and agreement of a WCB physiotherapist consultant or the manager of WCB health care services.

Discharge guidelines

WCB clients are discharged from treatment when they:

- Are not making any physical or functional gains.
- Have achieved their pre-injury work-related condition or capacities, or moved into secondary or tertiary treatment programs.

Physiotherapists will send PTP reports to the WCB within three business days of each client's discharge.

The WCB physical therapy consultant will review files to assist in determining the worker's entitlement to benefits. The WCB discourages maintenance care that is perceived to be preventative in nature but does not result in functional improvement. In certain exceptions, the WCB physical therapy consultant shall be contacted by the treating physiotherapist.

Identifying the need for reassessment

Physiotherapists will tell the WCB if an assessment team review is required to determine if secondary or tertiary level care is more appropriate, if the client:

- Needs more comprehensive care.
- Is not progressing satisfactorily.
- Is not recovering from the work injury.
- Requires psychology and or pain management services.

The physiotherapist will continue with normal treatment prior to the assessment team review only if the client will physically or functionally benefit from the treatment. Otherwise, the physiotherapist may continue treatment at a decreased frequency to ensure that a regression of the injury does not occur.

Physiotherapists can contact the WCB physical therapy consultant at:

- Phone: 306.787.4370
- Toll free phone: 1.800.667.7590

If a worker, as a result of an assessment team review or physical/functional capacity evaluation, requires secondary or tertiary level care, the WCB health care services co-ordinator will refer the worker to a care centre if the primary care provider has not indicated a preference. To the extent possible, the health care services co-ordinator will make the referral to the centre that currently provided the primary level care, while ensuring there is equal distribution of clients among secondary and tertiary providers.

Facility

To fulfil the needs of WCB clients, physical therapy treatment centres must have:

- adequate space
- facilities
- equipment

In the absence of standards from the Saskatchewan College of Physical Therapists, Saskatchewan Physiotherapy Association or the Canadian Physiotherapy Association, adequacy will be determined by the clinic survey tool.

Continuing education

Physical therapy treatment centres will provide an orientation program to all new staff, including training in emergency procedures, and processes established within the centre to provide care and return-to-work planning to WCB clients.

All physiotherapists will be encouraged to participate in continuing education programs and will have knowledge of current physical therapy practice and treatment protocols. All physiotherapists will comply with continuing education or competency programs developed by the Saskatchewan College of Physical Therapists.

All newly hired physiotherapists will view the two-part webinar on management of WCB clients featured on the WCB website at www.wcbask.com as part of their orientation and employment. Current physiotherapists will view the webinars by January 2017.

Storage of health information and charting

There will be a written or electronic report for each client within the treatment facility. These reports will include the:

- Findings of initial assessment.

- Goals of treatment.
- Treatment provided.
- Findings of periodic reviews.
- Details of the worker's job duties.
- Efforts made toward establishment of transitional and then full return to work.
- Discharge summary.

Charting and storage of health information will meet all requirements of:

- The Saskatchewan College of Physical Therapists.
- *The Health Information Protection Act (HIPA)*.
- *The Workers' Compensation Act, 2013*, and any future revisions.
- Any other applicable legislation.

If the worker requests a copy of the client chart, the information, excluding information received from the WCB, will be provided in the manner directed by the Saskatchewan College of Physical Therapists. Physiotherapists will tell clients that a copy of their WCB file or individual WCB documents are obtained from the WCB rather than the physical therapy clinic.

Duty to report work injury

Section 55 of the Act states:

“Any health care professional who attends to or is consulted with respect to an injury to a worker shall:

- (a) furnish the board with any reports with respect to the examination or treatment of the worker that are relevant to the injury for which compensation is claimed;
- (b) give all reasonable and necessary information, advice and assistance to the injured worker or the worker's dependants in making an application for compensation; and
- (c) furnish any certificates and proofs that the board may require.”

Physiotherapists will report work-related injuries to the WCB by sending PTI reports to the WCB.

Physiotherapists will tell workers to report injuries to the WCB by:

- Completing a Worker's Initial Report of Injury (W1) form. Physiotherapists may attach the W1 form to the PTI report. The worker can complete the W1 form:
 - **Online:** On the WCB's website at www.wcbask.com.
 - **By email:** Download the W1 form from the WCB's website, fill it out in pen, and then scan and email the completed form to forms@wcbask.com.
 - **By mail:** Download the W1 form from the WCB's website, fill it out in pen and mail the signed copy to the WCB at:
200-1881 Scarth St.
Regina, SK S4P 4L1
 - **By phone:** Call the WCB at 1.800.787.9288 and a WCB representative will take the information to complete the form for the worker.

WCB reporting forms

WCB reporting forms and frequency of reporting are subject to periodic revision, with input from the Saskatchewan Physiotherapy Association and the WCB's physical therapy consultant. The WCB will provide sufficient time to physical therapy treatment centres to implement the use of the revised templates.

Physiotherapists will send PTI reports to the WCB within three business days of the initial assessments.

To request extensions, physiotherapists will send PTP reports to the WCB every 10 visits.

Physiotherapists will send PTP reports to the WCB within three business days of the clients' discharge.

Physiotherapists will send return-to-work schedules to the WCB before they begin. If the schedules need changes, physiotherapists will tell the WCB. The WCB will provide a financial incentive to physiotherapists that report online.

Confidentiality requirements

Physiotherapists will treat all health-related and personal information in a confidential manner. No information will be revealed to any person or party other than those persons to whom reports are to be made or to such other persons as may from time-to-time be designated by the WCB. Information pertaining to functional ability may be provided to the employer for the purposes of establishing a return-to-work arrangement.

All public relations work, interviews, public appearances and press releases related to services being provided to WCB clients will require WCB approval.

Physiotherapists will not, without prior written approval of the WCB, publish or allow to be published any work that relies upon or uses information obtained by the physiotherapist, the Saskatchewan Physiotherapy Association or its members in carrying out the terms of this agreement, except for retroactive research where the workers treated are not identifiable.

Quality assurance and performance evaluation measures

There must be a sufficient number of physiotherapists on staff to provide efficient and effective services. Physiotherapists will make reasonable efforts to provide evidence-based care. The ratio of non-professional to professional staff in a physical therapy centre must meet the standards of the Saskatchewan College of Physical Therapists.

Each physical therapy centre will evaluate the quality and quantity of care provided. The evaluation will include an evaluation of outcomes by using functional outcome measures. Centres must be able to provide verification upon the WCB's request that physiotherapists have not provided care to more than three clients in the hour that care was provided to a WCB client subject to the "Management Guidelines" under Section 4, "Practice Guidelines".

Compliance to these standards will be evaluated through quality assurance processes that utilize a clinic survey process.

Performance and quality care will be measured by the primary care provider review process and, when a therapist or clinic does not achieve a satisfactory score, the six-step process that comprises that review will be implemented.

Fees for service

Section 103(1) of the Act states:

"Every worker who is entitled to compensation or who is disabled only on the day of the injury is entitled without charge to:

- (a) any medical aid that may be necessary as a result of the injury;
- (b) any other treatment by a health care professional."

Physiotherapists will ensure that WCB clients never pay for their services and that billing is always directed to the WCB. Physiotherapists will adhere to the service fees and fee codes for physical therapists providing out-patient and private clinic services to WCB clients (Schedule B) and will not extra bill WCB clients.

If the worker has sustained a soft tissue injury, the soft tissue treatment guidelines (Schedule A) will be adopted and billed accordingly, unless the WCB physical therapy consultant has been contacted regarding an amended protocol and has recorded the need for additional funding on the file.

Prorated service fees, billed as 20-minute units of care, will be rounded up to the next full 20-minute unit of care, with ethical scheduling guiding the practitioner.

Modalities are discouraged, but when necessary will not be billed independent of other therapeutic interventions and will be suitable to the stage of tissue healing specific to the worker. Theraband also must not be extra billed to the worker and/or the WCB and is considered a component of the already funded physical therapy. Theraballs and other equipment are billable to the WCB only with prior approval of the case manager, who may consult with the WCB's physical therapy consultant regarding appropriateness of the prescription. The case manager must be contacted by the physiotherapist in writing and WCB payment must be refused before the physiotherapist recommends any equipment being billed to the worker. To reduce the perception of prescriber/provider bias, the WCB will pay the manufacturer's fee plus a 10 per cent handling fee.

If the WCB feels an audit of invoices is necessary, each clinic will have a means of demonstrating the services that were actually provided to the injured worker. The WCB may conduct a retrospective audit and rescind fees for a period not to exceed three years.

Return to work

Section 53 of the Act states:

“An employer shall co-operate with the board and the worker to achieve the early and safe return of an injured worker to his or her employment.”

If the physiotherapist is acting as the primary care provider, restrictions should be provided to the worker and employer at the time of the initial assessment. If the therapist is acting as a co-treater, the physiotherapist will contact the employer to determine the availability of transitional return to work.

If transitional return to work is available and appropriate, within a week of the initial assessment, the physiotherapist will co-ordinate a transitional return-to-work plan with the:

- primary care provider
- worker
- employer
- WCB



Information regarding this contact will be relayed to the WCB via the initial report or via the Practitioner Return to Work (PRTW) form. The duration and start date of the transitional return-to-work plan will be based on clinical judgment regarding type and severity of injury, the stages of tissue healing, the physical requirements of the pre-injury job and the availability of transitional return to work. If any return-to-work partner is not co-operative with return-to-work planning, the physiotherapist will advise the WCB that a barrier to recovery has occurred using the initial or progress report form, allowing the WCB to make contact with the individual. The resultant transitional return-to-work plan will be forwarded to the WCB using the PRTW form, which should be resubmitted if revisions to the original plan occur.

The same process will occur for co-ordinating graduated return-to-work plans.

Terms of agreement

These service provider guidelines and service fees shall come into effect Jan. 1, 2020 and shall continue in full force and effect until Dec. 31, 2022, unless earlier termination occurs in accordance with Clauses 7 or 8 of this agreement.

Notwithstanding the forgoing, from time-to-time the schedules to this agreement may be updated in accordance with this agreement, without affecting the terms hereof.

Ongoing relationship

Ongoing input from physiotherapists will be obtained from the WCB physical therapy consultants, individuals who respond to an expression of interest advertised by the WCB and/or by request input or information from the Saskatchewan Physiotherapy Association and the Saskatchewan College of Physical Therapy. If physiotherapists would like to provide input about the care of WCB clients that is not file specific, they should contact the president of the Saskatchewan Physiotherapy Association or their third-party payers committee, who will then request to meet with the manager of health care services.