

May 10, 2016

AN ACT to amend the workers' compensation law, in relation to physical therapy care provided through the workers' compensation system

**S. 2718 (Griffo)**  
**A. 2116 (Zebrowski)**

### **MEMORANDUM IN SUPPORT**

The New York Physical Therapy Association (“NYPTA”), which represents the interests of 12,000 physical therapists, physical therapist assistants and physical therapy students in New York, supports S.2718/A.2116, which would allow physical therapist assistants to provide care under the workers' compensation system. This legislation recognizes the integral role physical therapist assistants play in the delivery of physical therapy care, and would allow for a more efficient delivery of services for patients, providers, and the overall workers' compensation system.

Physical therapist assistants are licensed professionals that work under the supervision of physical therapists. Physical therapist assistants are educated and trained to provide physical therapy care once a treatment plan has been established by a physical therapist. They are active participants in the provision of physical therapy care and play a parallel role in the delivery of care as dental hygienists (dentist), physician assistants or registered nurses (physician), and occupational therapist assistants (occupational therapist).

The vast majority of payors cover the services rendered by physical therapist assistants; however, the workers' compensation system does not cover physical therapy care delivered by physical therapist assistants. This oversight creates an anomaly for the provision of physical therapy care in the workers' compensation system.

The failure of the workers' compensation system to cover physical therapy assistant services augments the extensive administrative inefficiencies within the workers' compensation system. In addition to a physical therapist having to look up the guidelines for each condition treated, ensure that the appropriate CPT codes are utilized, and complete paperwork for and await approval of requests for additional treatment, physical therapy practices have to closely track workers' compensation patients to ensure that they do not receive services from a physical therapist assistant (while that is not the case for all other patients).

The exclusion of physical therapist assistants from participating in the delivery of care for injured workers creates an inefficiency that does not exist anywhere else in the delivery of physical therapy care and for a system where physical therapy care is reimbursed at or near the lowest in the country. S.2718/A.2116 corrects the oversight and in so doing, recognizes the skill and value of physical therapist assistants, and authorizes physical therapist assistants to provide care under the workers' compensation system.

For these reasons, NYPTA supports the enactment of this legislation.