



Position Statement on Value vs. Productivity Measurement in Acute Care Physical Therapy

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The measurement of productivity in acute care physical therapy practice requires an effective system which captures the value of physical therapist services to the patient, as well as value to the healthcare system and society. The current use of time based CPT codes, intended for use in ambulatory care environments, do not capture nor define the value of physical therapist services to the stakeholders of physical therapist services, specifically patients, their significant others, and the health care system.

The value for acute care physical therapist services must include the patient's unique needs that drive the determination of their condition severity and co-morbidities. These include anticipated goals and expected outcomes, taking into consideration the expectations of the patient/client and appropriate others, the intensity of the care provided, and the cost of those services that strive to meet those goals, which can only be achieved through skilled physical therapist services. Physical therapist services in the acute care setting include direct patient care, education to patients/clients, families, significant others, and caregivers and clinical decision making and collaboration with other health care providers to determine the appropriate level of post-acute care.

Productivity, when measured solely as a percentage of daily staff time engaged in direct interventions, holds little value for the stakeholders of physical therapist services. Focusing on these specific interventions may actually impede the physical therapist's ability to meet the goals of the patients/clients, families, significant others, and caregivers, the healthcare system and society.

A blended measurement system that encompasses the patient's disease, severity of limitations in functioning, patients/clients, families, significant others, and caregivers defined outcomes, as well as the cost of the care that meets those outcomes is the most effective way to determine the value of acute care physical therapist services to the patient, and the healthcare system.