

Quick Reference for Physical Therapist as Primary Treating Provider



This document provides general information related to a physical therapist treating an injured employee. A medical provider should be familiar with the following elements of care specific to working with Workforce Safety & Insurance (WSI). For additional information, forms, and resources visit www.workforcesafety.com.

Responsibilities of a Primary Treating Provider

Effective August 1, 2021, a physical therapist may be the primary treating provider for an injured employee. An injured employee may only have one primary treating provider, who manages the following:

- **Stay/Return to Work Planning:** The primary treating provider has an important role in helping an injured employee stay at work or return to work as soon as medically reasonable and safe. Early in the course of treatment, the primary treating provider should discuss the healing process and expected recovery time with the injured employee. The primary treating provider should emphasize the positive role of activity on physical and psychological healing.
- **Correspondence with WSI:** A primary treating provider will be required to respond to letters and complete forms addressing questions regarding the injury.
- **Capability assessment:** A primary treating provider should document an injured employee's abilities every 2 weeks, as long as the injured employee has work restrictions, or until they have reached maximum medical improvement. The [Capability Assessment \(C3\) form](#) is a useful tool for this documentation. The injured employee should receive a copy of the C3 form to give to their employer to assist in job accommodation decisions.
- **Maximum Medical Improvement (MMI):** MMI is the point at which the injury will no longer improve with continued care. WSI relies on the primary treating provider's accurate and timely designation of MMI to guide claim management.
- **Referral:** A primary treating provider may refer an injured employee for evaluation and/or treatment with another specialty (except mental health) without prior authorization from WSI.

Designated Medical Provider

If an injured employee requests treatment, it is important to understand the employer may already have a designated medical provider (DMP). If so, the injured employee is required to treat with the DMP, and any therapy treatment would require a referral from the DMP.

Evaluations and Re-evaluations

WSI considers evaluations and re-evaluations medically necessary to:

- Complete an initial assessment
- Assess an injured employee's functional capabilities every 2 weeks
- Evaluate an injured employee with an exacerbated condition or condition failing to improve
- Evaluate an injured employee who has a lapse in care

Workability Assessments

A physical therapist may perform physical performance testing, i.e., a workability assessment, every 2 weeks to assess an injured employee's functional capabilities. This assessment should include testing or measurements that evaluate an injured employee's ability to complete specific tasks.

WSI does not require prior authorization for a workability assessment completed by a physical therapist serving as the primary treating provider. The workability is reimbursable under the following criteria:

- Performed no more than once every 2 weeks
- Does not exceed 3 units (≥ 38 through 52 minutes)
- Billed using CPT® 97750

Additional Resources

A provider will also find useful information in the below publications:

- [Quick Reference for New Providers](#)
- [Quick Reference for Physical & Occupational Therapists](#)
- [Utilization Review Guide](#)
- [Durable Medical Equipment \(DME\) Guide](#)

News

WSI utilizes the [Provider News](#) section of the website to communicate updates regarding the agency, billing/fee schedules, utilization review, and pharmacy. To receive notification of new postings, a provider may [subscribe](#) to the electronic mailing list.