

**PRESS RELEASE**

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**Physical Therapists Play Key Role in Reducing Frequency of ACL Injuries**

Chester Springs, PA – March 15, 2016 – A quick change in direction on the soccer field or a shaky landing following an explosive jump on the basketball court can spell trouble for the anterior cruciate ligament (ACL). Each year, the United States sees anywhere from 80,000 to 250,000 ACL injuries, resulting in about 100,000 ACL reconstructions, according to the *Journal of Orthopedic and Sports Physical Therapy*. Moreover, statistics show the prevalence of ACL injuries has surged in recent years alongside a spike in youth sports participation.

With a reported 36 million kids (aged 5 to 18 years) playing organized sports each year, the chances of an athlete tearing her ACL are good. The populations most at risk are young female athletes—who sustain ACL injuries nearly 10 times more often than males—and young athletes who specialize in a single sport at an early age. To avoid the physical, emotional and economic toll of such an injury, athletes are beginning to embrace preventive programs.

Many think of physical therapists when it comes to treating ACL injuries, but the latest research shows a need for the rehab professionals to play an even bigger role in prevention. An *American Journal of Sports Medicine* study concluded that incidents of ACL injury drop by about 50% at the hands of neuromuscular and educational interventions led by physical therapists.

“While some of the risk factors are completely out of our hands, it is important to realize that we do have some control in preventing such a serious injury,” said Dr. Lisa Clark, PT, DPT. “Evaluating and correcting squatting, pivoting, landing, and jumping mechanics is a key strategy used by rehab professionals to protect their athletes.”

Contrary to popular belief, three-quarters of all ACL tears are non-contact injuries, occurring when an athlete cuts, decelerates or jumps. Sports including basketball, soccer, volleyball and football, and activities that involve jumping and landing, open field running and cutting or deceleration moves put athletes at a higher risk of ACL injury. Why are these routine moves so harmful? The biggest culprit is often muscle imbalance.

Physical therapists, particularly those who specialize in sports medicine, are trained to develop an individually tailored program based on an assessment of the athlete’s functional deficits in motion, strength and control. The program might address strength, flexibility and coordination, and correct existing movement patterns that may be damaging to joints.

Dr. Clark added, “We should also be taking a thorough look at core and hip strength as that is the foundation of all movement. Once the mechanical deviations are identified, we can begin to address and correct any motor control deficits and weaknesses leading to compensatory strategies that may increase

the risk of injury. As rehab professionals, we are always here to help return an athlete to sport, but we should first be helping our athletes to prevent injuries.”

It’s important to remember that regular neuromusculoskeletal evaluations with a physical therapist can help identify impairments, and reduce the risk of ACL and other injuries. And, there’s a lot at stake: post-operative rehabilitation will set an athlete back nine months on average, delay her return to sport, and in some cases, prevent a return to prior intensity and skill level.

#### **About The Private Practice Section of the American Physical Therapy Association**

Founded in 1956, the Private Practice Section of the American Physical Therapy Association champions the success of physical therapist-owned businesses. Our members are leaders and innovators in the health care system. The American Physical Therapy Association (APTA) represents more than 85,000 physical therapists, physical therapist assistants and students of physical therapy nationwide. For more information, please visit [www.ppsapta.org](http://www.ppsapta.org).

#### **About Kinetic Physical Therapy**

Kinetic Physical Therapy is changing the way movement rehabilitation is managed in our community. We take an industry leading, innovative and evidence-based approach to the care of our patients. We strive to be the first call you make for all of your health and wellness needs. From your first encounter, our team will create an environment that is conducive to healing, energetic, and fun. With our highly skilled professionals and vast product line, we will get you moving toward accomplishing your goals.