

**PRESS RELEASE**

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**All Physical Therapy Clinics Are Not Created Equal**

Chester Springs, PA – August 1<sup>st</sup>, 2016 – Imagine a scenario in which a patient learns he needs a dreaded root canal. The dentist’s plan of care requires four visits instead of the standard two and the patient will be on the hook for double the typical out-of-pocket costs. On top of that, the patient will receive a lower quality of care than if he went elsewhere. Should the patient stand for that? Of course not.

When it comes to the physical therapy needed following total knee replacement (TKR) surgery, a study published in the scientific journal *Health Services Research* says this type of scenario may be more common than you think. Where patients get physical therapy following TKR may affect how much the rehab costs, how many visits they need, and the quality of care they receive.

Led by Jean M. Mitchell, PhD, James D. Reschovsky, PhD, and Elizabeth Anne Reicherter, PT, DPT, PhD, the study examined whether the course of physical therapy treatments received by patients who undergo TKR surgery varies depending on whether the orthopedic surgeon has a financial stake in physical therapy services, often called physician self-referral. In reviewing 3,771 TKR patients, the study investigators concluded that physical therapists not involved with physician-owned clinics saw patients for fewer visits and provided more individualized care at a lower out-of-pocket cost.

“Patients should know that, as customers, they have the right to choose where they receive their care. This includes post-operative care,” said Dr. Jason Elvin, PT, DPT, OCS. “After a TKR, patients should familiarize themselves with clinics in their area and consider using a facility that specializes in physical therapy, as opposed to the one-stop-shop settings that offer a wide variety of services and may be physician owned. Albeit convenient, these facilities may not provide the most cost-effective, individualized treatments in terms of physical therapy.”

Dr. Elvin, the Director of Clinical Quality at Kinetic Physical Therapy, added, “This recent study proves that selecting the right facility not only gets you better faster, but can save you money as well.”

Specifically, the study found that TKR patients who were treated in a clinic owned by their orthopedic surgeon received an average of 8.3 more (or twice as many) PT visits than those who were treated in a clinic in which their orthopedic surgeon had no financial stake.

Rehab professionals would like patients to know they have options and do not automatically need to see a physical therapist who works in the surgeon’s own clinic. Members of the PT profession are urging

patients to seek out an evaluation by a physical therapist who specializes in orthopedics, ideally before scheduling a surgery consult. If that's not possible, the public should consider seeing a PT outside of the physician self-referral clinics in order to receive more individualized care that is task specific to each patient's deficits and impairments following surgery.

The rehab program in a physician self-referral clinic is often heavily focused on group therapy sessions. In such a setting, the PT may not be able to observe and address each patient's deficits. Conversely, patients treated in an individualized physical therapy program will be better sooner and receive better care. Higher quality care correlates with more efficient and effective episodes of care.

The study, titled Use of Physical Therapy Following Total Knee Replacement Surgery: Implications of Orthopedic Surgeons' Ownership of Physical Therapy Services, was partially funded by the American Physical Therapy Association's Private Practice Section.

#### **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).