DIRECT ACCESS

Access to Physical Therapy - There are two ways for you to see the therapists at Suburban PT:
1. Referral by a Healthcare Provider (see list below)
2. Self Referral (Direct Access)

Health Care Providers Who May Refer to Physical Therapy -
• Physician (MD, DO)
• Physician Assistant (PAC)
• Nurse Practitioner (NP, ANP, PNP, FNP, GNP)
• Naturopathic Physician (ND)
• Chiropractor (DC)
• Podiatrist (DP) (For foot and ankle problems)
• Dentist (DDS, DMD) (For disorders of the jaw)

Direct Access - This term refers to your ability to see a Physical Therapist (PT) without a physician's referral. As of 10/2007, 48 states allow physical therapists to evaluate patients without a prior physician's referral. Forty-four states and the District of Columbia improve access further by allowing physical therapists to evaluate and treat, under certain conditions, patients without a referral from a physician, including the state of Ohio, which passed legislation in 2003. This means that any patient has the legal right to seek out services from any PT that they wish to see. Ohio's direct access law has a few restrictions. After the initial evaluation, the physical therapist must inform the patient's physician of his or her findings within five days. And, if there is no substantial progress in the patient's condition after 30 days, the physical therapist must consult with or refer the patient to a doctor.

The only remaining states that presently do not have such access are: Alabama, Hawaii, Indiana, Michigan, Missouri and Oklahoma.

Forty-eight states allow PT's to conduct an initial examination without a physician's referral (but these 6 do not allow treatment). (1)

Benefits to You -
• Save time and money by eliminating a physician referral visit - treatment is less costly and there are fewer numbers of services when compared to cases where a referral was obtained
• Eliminate delays that can result in decreased functional outcomes and frustration
• Allow for an earlier return to work and daily activities.
• Reduce the need for long-term care by providing earlier intervention - medical studies show that immediate care for most musculoskeletal injuries can reduce healing time
• Experience the expedited recovery and return to daily tasks, work demands and sports that early intervention provides

Our Qualifications - Our therapists are educated at least at the baccalaureate level and receive extensive continuing education and clinical training to provide care independent of physician referrals. We also have established relationships with area physicians to make the appropriate referral, should you request or require one. Referral to a physician may be recommended if a non-PT related problem is suspected, if the condition isn’t appropriate for physical therapy or if you don’t improve in a reasonable amount of time.

Insurance - The best way to know what your insurance plan will cover if you decide to utilize direct access is to call them. In many states with direct access, insurance companies are now reimbursing because they realize that it costs less when you have the choice to access physical therapy without a delay.

Payment Options - Payment plans can be arranged for those who are concerned about the costs of their physical therapy care. Our office will work with you to establish a plan of care that will accomplish your goals and maintain efficiency of treatment.

References - (1) American Physical Therapy Association