

**PAYMENT COMMITTEE REPORT
TO
LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE AND APTAWA BOD
FEBRUARY 17 AND MARCH 7, 2026**

APTA efforts led to changes in commercial and government payer policies that reduced administrative burden and advanced payment.

Date: Wednesday, February 4, 2026

Efforts from APTA members and staff led to 26 million-plus people having direct access to physical therapist services – and that's just one of the 21 regulatory policy changes APTA staff advocated for in 2025.

In 2025, APTA members and staff successfully advocated for meaningful payment reforms with commercial and government payers. Focused on increasing access to PT services, reducing administrative burden, and advancing fair payment, APTA's coordinated and strategic efforts demonstrated APTA's ongoing commitment to advancing payment for the profession.

APTA 2025 Payer Advocacy Impact at a Glance

In 2025, APTA's payer advocacy delivered measurable results:

- 21 policy changes with commercial and government payers
- 8 APTA member nominations to federal advisory committees
- 26 million-plus Aetna beneficiaries gained direct access to PT services
- 5 webinars hosted by payment staff experts, reaching more than 750 members each
- 3 payment-related APTA Practice Advisories published
- 4 new remote therapeutic monitoring codes created in the 2026 final Medicare Physician Fee Schedule
- 1,913 member-submitted letters sent to CMS on the proposed Medicare Physician Fee Schedule and Home Health rule
- 1.75% average increase in reimbursement for physical therapists under the 2025 Medicare Physician Fee Schedule – the first increase in five years

These outcomes reflect the strong influence APTA and our members have on payment policy and the power of a unified advocacy approach.

Advocacy in Action

Holding Private Payers Accountable for Fair and Lawful Payment

APTA has made significant progress in holding private payers accountable and protecting fair payment for physical therapist services. Most notably, APTA and APTA Private Practice joined the federal MultiPlan Antitrust Litigation as organizational plaintiffs to challenge an alleged price-fixing scheme that systematically underpays physical therapists for out-of-network care.

In 2026, APTA will continue its efforts to hold private payers accountable by exploring opportunities in alternative payment models and value-based payment.

Expanding Access and Modernizing Private Payer Policies

APTA's advocacy has also driven major access and policy improvements with national insurers. In June 2025, Aetna updated its physical therapy policy to allow unrestricted direct access, expanding patient choice for more than 26 million beneficiaries.

Building on that win, Aetna further strengthened its policies by removing the homebound requirement for home-based PT services, recognizing telehealth as appropriate for PT services, and aligning PTA supervision with Medicare in most states.

Similarly, following targeted advocacy from APTA and state chapters, Anthem reversed its requirement for start-and-stop time documentation for each CPT code. This change reduced administrative burden, aligned with evidence-based practice, and protected payment integrity for physical therapist services. APTA is continuing to work to have this policy changed in Virginia and California as well.

These policy wins reflect years of advocacy and positive relationship-building by APTA staff. This year, APTA is continuing to advocate for similar policies that reflect the full scope of PT practice.

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Reducing Burden and Expanding Capacity Across Federal Programs

Beyond commercial payers, APTA secured meaningful policy clarifications and capacity-expanding reforms that support efficient payment and care delivery.

Medicare contractors and CMS updated plan of care guidance to align with new federal signature exceptions, reducing delays and administrative friction.

TRICARE also adopted general supervision for physical therapist assistants in private practice, expanding access and clinic capacity — particularly for military families in rural and underserved areas.

In November 2025, APTA published "The Impact of Administrative Burden on Physical Therapist Services" report and infographic that staff are using to provide data-driven feedback in federal advocacy on burden reduction.

APTA advocacy staff will continue their efforts by working with CMS to update Chapter 15 of the Medicare Benefit Policy Manual, which sets the standard for compliance for outpatient physical therapy under Medicare. APTA will advocate for even further changes by asking CMS to remove the signature requirement on PT plans of care.

Additionally, staff will monitor the implementation of the Wasteful and Inappropriate Service Reduction, or WISeR, model to see if it will eventually be applicable for PTs.

How to Be an Advocate for the Profession

APTA cannot make these changes without members sharing both wins and challenges with APTA Advocacy staff. Members have inside perspectives on how policies are being enforced in their practices.

In 2026, APTA staff are committed to empowering members with information and education about all aspects of payment. Together, we will advance payment for the profession through the following:

- The first-ever APTA Payment Advocacy Summit

- Comment letter submissions and regular meetings with CMS and other federal agencies on key regulatory issues

- Building and maintaining relationships with private payers to address concerns in policy enforcement and proactively advocate for increased access to PT services

- APTA Regulatory, Legislative, and Payment Webinar Series (dates available soon)

- An update to the APTA Practice Advisory on remote therapeutic monitoring codes

- A new APTA Learning Center Course: "The PT Guide to Success in Medicare Part B"

- An updated Medicare enrollment FAQ (available soon)

Staff are also working on resources related to the Medicare appeals process and will once again offer guidance on how to submit comments on important issues like the fee schedule proposed rule.

There are numerous ways members can stay connected and engaged in APTA's advocacy initiatives:

- Join APTA's Advocacy Network to stay up to date on the latest developments in payment advocacy.

- Join the Alternative Payment Models Forum on the APTA Community to connect with peers and share insights, resources, and strategies for physical therapy in new and innovative delivery and payment models.

- Attend APTA's 2026 Capitol Hill Day, happening April 19-21. Members will come together in Washington, D.C., to connect, advocate, and make an impact alongside fellow physical therapy professionals and students on Capitol Hill. Register today and be a part of influencing policies that shape the future of physical therapy.

Apply for CMS' two new value-based care models for chronic care management and lifestyle interventions.

Use "The Impact of Administrative Burden on Physical Therapist Services" report and infographic in meetings with payers, regulators, and policymakers to advocate for the removal of unnecessary barriers to care.

Advancing payment is APTA's number one priority. Get the latest updates on the association's work to advance payment by subscribing to APTA's Payment Friday Focus in your email preferences.