

# NEWS RELEASE

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## HOUSE OF DELEGATES OF THE AMERICAN PHYSICAL THERAPY ASSOCIATION ENDORSES CDC AND WHITE HOUSE EFFORTS TO PUT A LID ON OPIOID ABUSE

NASHVILLE, TN, June 7, 2016 – The House of Delegates of the American Physical Therapy Association (APTA), the highest policy-making body of the physical therapy profession, today officially endorsed the national efforts of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the White House to address the epidemic of opioid abuse and dependence, as well as the CDC's recognition of physical therapist services as an alternative to opioids for managing pain. APTA is working in collaboration with the White House to address the opioid crisis.

The action is timely as [#ChoosePT](#), APTA's public education campaign to raise awareness among patients and prescribers about physical therapy as a safe alternative for pain management, launched on Monday, June 6. The APTA House of Delegate's action is a reflection of the deep commitment the association has to this issue, and the energy and excitement surrounding the #ChoosePT initiative. The motion was heard at the 72nd annual meeting of the House of Delegates, held in conjunction with APTA's NEXT conference in Nashville, Tennessee. APTA members have enthusiastically embraced the campaign both on site and via social media.

"The House's endorsement of the CDC and White House efforts underlines the importance of this issue," said APTA President Sharon L. Dunn, PT, PhD, who is a board-certified clinical specialist in orthopedic physical therapy. "The House motion evolved from an organic effort to support the fight against opioid abuse in line with the #ChoosePT campaign. I am pleased and excited to see such strong unity and support. We are better together, and I am sure this will help strengthen the efforts of the CDC and the White House, expand our reach, and ultimately put an end to this national crisis."

### About #ChoosePT

Physical therapy is one of the nonopioid alternatives recommended by the CDC in recently released guidelines that urge prescribers to reduce the use of opioids for most long-term pain management. The guidelines indicate that while prescription opioids are appropriate in certain cases (such as cancer treatment, palliative care, and end-of-life care), nonopioid approaches are preferred, given the damaging potential side effects of opioids, which include depression, overdose, and addiction, plus withdrawal symptoms when stopping use.

APTA's #ChoosePT campaign and the CDC guidelines come at a time when increasing numbers of Americans, no matter the economic class, are being touched by the opioid epidemic, which includes misuse of prescription opioids and heroin use. According to the CDC, the rate of overdose deaths involving opioids has nearly quadrupled since 1999, and in 2012 enough opioid prescriptions were written for "every American adult to have their own bottle of pills." The #ChoosePT campaign is meant to remind patients that nonopioid pain management options exist and that they have a choice when it comes to their care.

The #ChoosePT campaign website, [www.MoveForwardPT.com/ChoosePT](http://www.MoveForwardPT.com/ChoosePT), includes a [downloadable pain self-assessment](#), facts about pain and the opioid epidemic, and tips for avoiding chronic pain.

The national campaign will focus special attention on key states identified by the CDC as having the highest numbers of drug overdose deaths (West Virginia, New Mexico, New Hampshire, Kentucky, Ohio, and Rhode Island; data from 2014) and the highest numbers of opioid prescriptions (Tennessee, Alabama, West Virginia, Oklahoma, Kentucky, and Mississippi; data from 2012). APTA also is working with the White House in its efforts to address the opioid crisis.

Those looking to support the campaign on social media or learn more should use the #ChoosePT hashtag and follow @MoveForwardPT on Facebook, Twitter, and Pinterest.

The American Physical Therapy Association represents more than 93,000 physical therapists, physical therapist assistants, and students of physical therapy nationwide.

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