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**Bacharach**

## LEADERSHIP REPORT



EARLY PHYSICAL THERAPY OFFER MULTITUDE OF BENEFITS

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A study published in the APTA's Physical Therapy Journal found that patients with acute low back pain who get a referral for physical therapy (or self-refer as is allowed in NJ) and are treated within three days, use fewer opioids and have lower healthcare costs.

The study also revealed that early physical therapy decreased the need for advanced imaging, spinal injection, emergency room visits, spinal surgery and other healthcare services.

This is the first study to show the benefits of immediate physical therapy for patients who have acute low back pain, the most common work-related disability. Costs associated with this disability are more than \$100 billion each year.

This aligns with a movement within the physical therapy industry to help patients manage pain by treating it at the source rather than using pain medication.

Joyce Glick, VP Ambulatory Services for Bacharach explained, "Early access to physical therapy can help patients head off problems when they are experiencing pain. Narcotic pain medications only mask the pain, whereas a complete assessment by a physical therapist can help patients locate the source of the pain. Once we locate the source of the pain – we can create an effective treatment program to help manage it."

In addition, a physical therapist can determine aggravating factors that make the pain worse. Assessing where and what type of pain the patient is experiencing and how long it has been a problem, combined with the occupational and behavioral factors that impact it – can provide the physical therapist with the tools needed to help manage the pain.

"We can teach people body mechanics that will help their bodies work in such a way that they lessen their pain. We run through simulations with patients to be sure they know how to move properly so they are not putting strain on an area that might be painful."

"We talk to patients about their goals – what do they want to do that they currently are not able to do? Recently, a patient wanted to be able to garden, but was unable to get down on her knees. She started gardening while sitting down and her mood immediately improved. This is important because those that feel better emotionally manage their pain better."

The results are clear - early intervention physical therapy offers patients numerous benefits and is well worth pursuing.

Sincerely,

Richard Kathrins  
President & CEO

AWARDED BY OUR PROFESSION

