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**Bay Area Patients Join Thousands of California Consumers Pushing  
for Direct Access to Physical Therapists' Services**

*Delays in Physical Therapy Treatment Costs  
Patients Time, Money and Additional Pain*

(San Francisco) - In the view of Hy Mariampolski, consumer direct access to a physical therapist is not just a good idea, it's necessary.

Suffering severe pain from an acute knee injury, Mariampolski said it was several weeks before he was correctly diagnosed by a physician and able to begin physical therapy treatments.

Hy was in Mexico when he strained his knee from overexertion while walking on the rough cobblestone streets. In crippling pain, he headed back to San Francisco and sought physical therapy using a previous diagnosis for a shoulder injury. "The physical therapist could not even touch or massage my sore knee because I did not have the proper referral slip with a physician's diagnosis for my knee," said Mariampolski. "The pain persisted, so I went to urgent care at UC San Francisco where the nurse prescribed only palliative care, a treatment plan that was ineffective. I urged her to give me a referral to a physical therapist, which I finally received."

When Mariampolski went to his first appointment, with an orthopedic surgeon the physician told him that he needed an MRI or a proper diagnosis. However, Mariampolski could not get an MRI because he has a pacemaker; a fact confirmed by his cardiologist in New York where he lives half the time.

"The orthopedic surgeon immediately wanted me to undergo surgery to find out what was wrong, but I thought that was excessive," said Mariampolski. "With the pain worsening, I made an appointment with a second orthopedic surgeon who made a diagnosis based on an X-ray and again, I was referred to physical therapy."

In the end, Mariampolski's condition turned out to be inflammation of a synovial membrane, which was resolved with physical therapy in working with Doctor of Physical Therapy Alejandra Salinas at San Francisco Sport and Spine Physical Therapy. But it took three weeks of pain and unnecessary frustration before his problem was resolved, something Mariampolski said would not have happened had he been afforded direct access to a physical therapist with whom he was already connected. Salinas said his inability to see a physician until three weeks passed may

have slowed down his recovery process and increased his anxiety making his rehabilitation that much slower.

Mark Redmond of San Francisco suffered a finger and shoulder injury in a motorcycle accident in July 2008. At the emergency department the physician sutured his finger, placed him in a full length arm splint and sling, and he was discharged.

Redmond was advised by the attending doctor that it was very important in the case of a hand injury to quickly obtain any additional care necessary to regain maximum functionality. So he spent the next few days securing an appointment with a hand surgeon, aware that he was experiencing significant shoulder pain as well.

“In all, it took me five days and several calls to several offices to get an appointment with a hand surgeon after I was discharged from the initial ED visit. The hand surgeon looked at my shoulder and referred me to an orthopedic surgeon. The orthopedic surgeon did not prescribe physical therapy.”

Redmond then sought a second opinion for his shoulder which resulted in a referral for physical therapy, an option Redmond would have preferred to have been available to him from the start.

“I’m a hands-on person and understand the importance of being proactive in accessing the care I need. I would have seen a physical therapist immediately to help alleviate my pain, if that option had been available to me. The process I went through did not allow me to seek care on my own behalf.”

“I was referred to Doctor of Physical Therapy Kylene Pring, and she did everything she could to lessen my pain with a custom-tailored care plan designed specifically to exercise and strengthen my shoulder and to break up scar tissue, which was a major source of my discomfort.”

Redmond’s injuries resulted in four surgeries in eight months.

“The treatment I received through physical therapy was seamless. Had I been able to make the decision myself to seek care from a physical therapist, I would have started physical therapy earlier, and I believe I would have suffered less pain and had a better recovery.”

Both Redmond and Mariampolski have joined a growing chorus of patients throughout California and the Bay Area in their support of AB 721 by Assemblymember Pedro Nava, which would allow consumer direct access to physical therapists’ services without a physician diagnosis and referral.

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