

For Immediate Release
October 14, 2008
Contact: Heather Pino
Executive Associate, Communications and Member Services
California Physical Therapy Association
(916) 929-2782
hpino@ccapta.org

**CALIFORNIA PHYSICAL THERAPISTS PROMOTE
NINTENDO WII FOR CORE STRENGTH AND FITNESS**

**“Wiihabilitation” is Fast Becoming an Accepted Form of Therapy at
Physical Therapy Clinics Statewide**

(Sacramento, CA) - With October being National Physical Therapy Awareness Month, expect Nintendo Wiis to be flying off the shelves. Among the first in line will be members of the California Physical Therapy Association (CPTA), who stand by the video game console and its accompanying sports and fitness games as one of the best therapeutic technology inventions to roll out in a long time.

“As physical therapists, we are movement specialists engaged in the CPTA-sponsored *MoveCalifornia* campaign to get people active and fit again. In the midst of this, we’re seeing a therapeutic phenomenon of sorts with kids, grown-ups and geriatric patients getting off the couch and learning how to properly use the Wii for core strength and balancing exercises,” said CPTA member Amy Calhoun Sanchez, PT, DPT, CSCS, NSCA-CPT.

Sanchez is a doctor of physical therapy working in the outpatient rehabilitation department at a local Los Angeles hospital and provides pediatric home health care for developmentally delayed children.

“In the clinic setting, we treat patients with acute and chronic pain, those recovering from surgery or stroke and many other conditions with specific balance and strengthening exercises and manual therapy, and they respond to that,” added Sanchez. “But the Wii sports games are interactive, fun and entertaining, and patients become more engaged playing with them. By teaching patients how to use the Wii in a clinic setting, we empower them to continue their exercise, fitness and training with the Wii Fitness in the comfort of their own homes.”

While Sanchez emphasized Wii is helpful in preventing injuries and falls and increasing functionality, she cautions that anyone with undiagnosed pain or untreated injuries should refrain from using the Wii without professional guidance.

“Playing a Wii game too soon after an injury can be extremely harmful to a person’s health and even set back recovery or lead to re-injury if he or she is not properly evaluated by a physical therapist first,” said Sanchez. “A therapist will help to decrease pain and improve posture before recommending or advancing a Wii regimen tailored to the individual’s specific needs.”

Sanchez noted most physical therapy includes core stability training, but often it is difficult to teach people how to engage their core. “They tend to arch their backs and put too much weight on their heels in a way that causes further pain with movement.”

“What’s so great about the Wii is it allows a patient to know where the body is in space by showing real-time movements on a screen in simulated yoga, aerobics, strength training and balance exercises,” stated Sanchez. “The Wii is the next best thing to simulating an environment on the golf course or tennis court, so we can see first hand what a person is doing wrong and correct that movement. The Wii makes for simple and fun therapy and, right now, is the coolest, new therapy around.”

###

MoveCalifornia is a CPTA-sponsored statewide public education campaign designed to call attention to the importance of wellness and daily physical exercise and the unique role physical therapists play in these areas. For more information about *MoveCalifornia*, visit the *MoveCalifornia* Web site at www.movecalifornia.org.