

# Physical Therapists: The Primary Care Managers of Musculoskeletal Pain



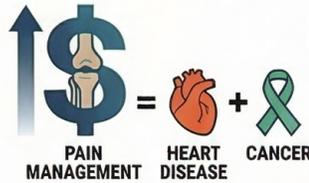
## THE PROBLEM: THE MSK KNOWLEDGE GAP

### 82% of Physicians Fail Basic MSK Competency

Board-Certified PT Specialists	94%
DPT Students	68%
Family Practice Physicians	61%
Medical Interns	60%

Research indicates MSK medicine underrepresented in medical school, leaving primary care MDs underprepared.

### The High Cost of Pain



U.S. spends more on pain than heart disease and cancer combined, MSK disorders leading cause of disability.

### A Growing Physician Shortage



Projected shortage of up to 40,000 primary care physicians by 2036, requiring a new model.

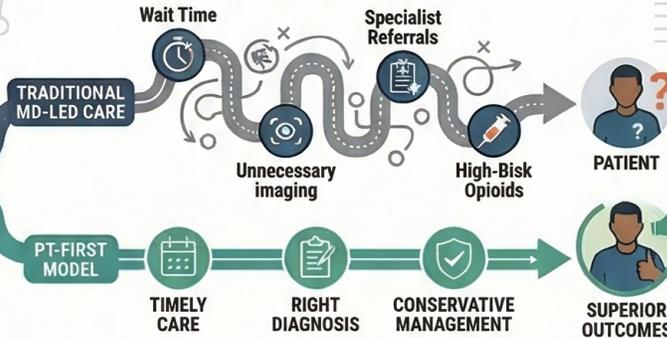


## THE SOLUTION: PTs AS MSK GATEKEEPERS



The Doctoral-Level Quarterback As (Neuro)Musculoskeletal gatekeepers, PTs use advanced triage and differential diagnosis to manage conditions.

### The "PT-First" Pathway



Moving from traditional MD-led episodic care to a first-contact PT model ensures patients get the right care in a timely manner.

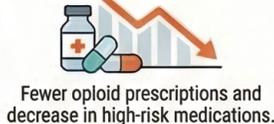


## CLINICAL & ECONOMIC IMPACT

### Superior Patient Outcomes



### Drastic Reduction in Opioid Use



Fewer opioid prescriptions and decrease in high-risk medications.

### Significant Cost Savings



### Economic Net Benefit per Episode of Care

Carpal Tunnel Syndrome	(\$39,533)	Lateral Epicondylitis (Tennis Elbow)	(\$10,739)
Vascular Claudication	(\$24,125)	Low Back Pain	(\$4,160)
Osteoarthritis of the Knee	(\$13,981)	Falls Prevention	(\$2,144)



## THE FUTURE OF PRIMARY CARE



**The Military "Capabilities Model"**  
Since 1973, US Military allows PTs to practice at top of scope, including ordering imaging, labs, and referrals.



**Legislative Momentum**  
Utah, North Dakota  
States grant PTs primary care provider status and expanded imaging privileges.



**"Get the right patient to the right provider."**  
Co-locating PTs within primary care teams enhances accessibility, communication, and continuity of care for the entire community.