



Julie Fischer
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During her tenure in the Risk Management field, Julie has gained experience from both the employer side with a large manufacturer and from the third-party administrator perspective with ESIS. For the past 18 years at ESIS, she has used her skills and knowledge to assist clients as a Senior Partnership Leader, then transitioned to the Medical Programs arena where she has responsibility for new medical program product development as well as the marketing/messaging for ESIS Medical Impact. In addition, Julie currently is product champion over many of ESIS' ancillary services programs. From employer risk management to account management, Julie has a unique appreciation and in-depth understanding of client needs and how to bring innovative ideas together to provide solutions.

63%
of lost time claims include physical medicine.² Optimizing your physical therapy approach can control costs and drive better outcomes for employees and employers alike.

5 Things to Know About Ensuring Your PT Program Delivers Maximum Benefits

Physical therapy (PT) plays an important role in the recovery of injured workers. It can also add to the medical costs and the duration for workers compensation claims, with the average claim incurring 19 PT visits and costs of approximately \$3,450.¹ To reduce claim duration and costs in cases involving PT, employers should look for physical medicine programs that check the boxes in five key areas, according to Julie Fischer, AVP, Medical Programs, at ESIS.

1 Flexible Options

Physical therapy is no longer limited to traditional brick and mortar settings. Telerehab options (including fully virtual and hybrid in-person options) now allow the injured worker to interact with an experienced clinician via webcam or phone, bringing important flexibility to the rehab process. Appointments can be scheduled at times more convenient for the injured worker, including early mornings and evenings – and travel and wait times are eliminated.

2 Built-in Advocacy

Ensuring an advocacy-focused approach to workers' care, including physical therapy, can pay dividends. When injured workers understand that everyone – adjuster, employer and provider – is concerned and working together to ensure they receive the best care possible to get them back to work and to their life, workers are much more engaged in their own recovery. An advocacy approach produces better outcomes than when care is delivered in a passive and procedure-focused way.

1. Wang, D., Mueller, K., and Lea, R., "The Timing of Physical Therapy for Low Back Pain: Does It Matter in Workers' Compensation?" Workers Compensation Research Institute.

2. Workers Compensation Research Institute

7.1

Physical therapy visits saved per referral.

ESIS' carefully crafted approach to physical therapy incorporates data analytics and clinical oversight, specialty review programs for early intervention, additional review of claims exceeding the expected number of PT sessions and appointment monitoring. This helps us ensure injured employees receive the appropriate level of care and number of visits.

ESIS Continuum of Care

ESIS Medical Impact team offers solutions that provide a continuum of care for injured workers to help ensure optimal outcomes while helping our clients manage costs effectively.

- Early Intervention
- Data Analytics Driving Action
- Injured Worker Resources
- Supporting Care and Recovery
- Cost Reduction Solutions
- Clinical Support

3 The Right Providers

Building a successful physical medicine program requires the right providers – and that's not just about licensing qualifications and sufficient coverage to fit an employer's needs. The most successful programs utilize providers who are actively engaged in the shared goal of getting the injured worker back to work and to their pre-injury life as soon as possible. Enlisting providers in your program who are truly vested in the employee's progress and recovery can help enhance an employee's successful recovery.

4 Expanded Goal Setting and Benchmarks of Success

In the world of workers compensation claims, PT outcomes tend to be measured in costs and number of visits. The "success" of a case and the injured worker's recovery is often measured against Official Disability Guidelines (ODG). Consider expanding the view of success to look at areas such as goal setting and engage employees to set personal objectives for recovery – such as getting back to running or playing with their children. This approach helps them become more invested in the process and can lead to better outcomes. Highlight that if fewer visits are needed to achieve the desired outcome, it is to be celebrated not because it saved costs for the claim but because the employee reached a personal milestone that was important to them. Similarly, if some cases have gone over the recommended duration order, view this as money well spent if it leads to a fuller recovery.

5 Communication, Communication, Communication!

Physical therapists have a lot of one-on-one time with their injured worker patients – typically more than the claim representative or even the doctor will. If there is good rapport, the injured worker may share concerns about issues surrounding their injury or recovery. Physical therapists can therefore be an important source of information for the adjuster, other providers, case managers and the employer about the injured worker's progress, obstacles, and care. Encouraging open lines of communication and collaboration within the team can help eliminate potential roadblocks to recovery, marshal additional resources as necessary, and ensure the workers get what they need to support their best recovery

To learn more about our physical therapy programs and other ways we help improve outcomes and reduce your total cost of risk, connect with us today.

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For more insights on how we can help you reduce your total cost of risk, connect with us on [LinkedIn](#)