



# Physical Therapy Embedded in PACT

*Physical Therapy Embedded in Primary Care Patient Aligned Care Teams  
Improves Access to Care for Veterans*

**Bottom Line Up Front:** Embedding PT in PACT reduces Primary Care workload, improves management of musculoskeletal pain and other conditions, and decreases healthcare costs and the demand for community care. This model was successfully piloted in VISN 23 demonstrating improved access and outcomes, and reduced referrals to specialists.

**Description:** Embedding PT within Primary Care makes physical therapy available to the patient immediately at the time of the primary care visit and results in improved outcomes and cost savings. This has been demonstrated in studies in the Department of Defense and in the private sector where up to \$1200 savings per patient was realized. 3rd party insurance has begun to waive co-pays if a patient sees a PT first for certain conditions and TRICARE has waived the cost sharing fee for physical therapy in 10 states.

**Benefits:** By embedding Physical Therapy into primary care, the Veteran can more readily access same day care for musculoskeletal complaints or other concerns reducing risk of chronicity or other sequelae of delayed care. Veterans are also able to receive some prosthetic items in a timelier manner to further assist with their recovery. Earlier access to physical therapy reduces primary care provider visits and referrals to specialty providers saving time and money.

## OUTCOMES

### Primary: Access to Care - Wait Time

- New patient wait time was reduced by 37% from preferred date and 34% from Create Date supporting that by embedding PT into Primary Care Veterans were able to see a Physical Therapist earlier.

### Functional Improvement

- PROMIS 6b Pain Interference Outcome measure demonstrated 87% improvement for Veterans indicating significantly reduced impact of pain on relevant aspects of the Veteran's life.

### Reduction in Specialty Referrals from Primary Care

- Imaging consults across V23 reduced by 52% from FY16 to FY19
- Pain referrals across V23 reduced by 28% from FY16 to FY19

### Productivity

- Physical Therapy Productivity increased 9-30% at sites

### Veteran Satisfaction

- Medallia VSignals for PACT PT was 5/5 for all measures including "I Trust the VA" at Medical Center