



Northwest Physical Therapy

Changing lives... One step at a time

September 11, 2021

The Honorable Bob Latta
2467 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressman Latta:

My name is Todd Hanneman and I am the Executive Director of Northwest Physical Therapy based out of Ottawa, Ohio. Northwest Physical Therapy was founded in 1993 and is owned by Brian and Wanda Dean, and I am writing you on their behalf. Our organization provides Physical Therapy, Occupational Therapy and Speech Pathology services in our 4 outpatient centers, as well as providing those same services through contractual arrangements with several home health organizations, providing In-Home therapy care to the debilitated homebound, covering a 19-county region in Northwest Ohio. Northwest Physical Therapy employs approximately 60 associates. We have worked and served rural Ohio for almost 3 decades touching and healing several thousands of lives annually. Northwest Physical Therapy provides close to 50,000 patient rehabilitative treatment encounters annually.

I am writing you today to express our concerns to the release of new policy from the Biden-Harris administration mandating vaccinations for all health care organizations who receive federal Medicare/Medicaid funding. I will summarize our concerns below:

- This will impact our workforce and our ability to reach our patients as we will have therapists who will choose to not receive the vaccine.
 - We currently have a health care worker shortage in our country, but even more so in rural America. With a mandate, health care choosing not to be vaccinated will be put out of work.
 - This will limit our ability to treat patients who are homebound, unable to leave their home for medical services. These individuals may be recovering from a stroke, pneumonia, heart surgery, COVID, or any number of illness or debilitations. This can lead to a higher incidence of re-hospitalizations, less functional progress, and longer debilitation period.
 - This will limit the number of therapists and the ability to treat our patients in the outpatient setting who are being treated to relieve back and neck pain, recovering from an accident or injury, and often recovering from a work injury. This could lead to more narcotics use, less functional progress, and a longer recovery period for the patient to return to work.
 - The lives lost due to lack of proper number of clinicians to take care of our elderly – our most vulnerable of our communities- will way surpass any death count from covid.
- This will affect our skilled workforce. Some of our associates who choose not to get the vaccine are our senior therapists, with 20, 25, and 30 years of experience. The experience which these clinicians



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hold is insurmountable. The skill, compassion, care, and dedication to their craft is second to none. We can't replace these senior clinicians fast enough with the new work force.

- Business impact:
 - Outpatient services
 - Our outpatient average annual income is between \$1.7-1.9 million. 40% of that is from Medicare.
 - If we OPT OUT of Medicare, we would lose close to \$700,000 in outpatient revenue.
 - Home Health Services
 - Our home health average annual income is close to \$1,000,000. This service is almost exclusively Medicare funded, which we would lose 100% of these fees.
 - The Impact: Our annual Income would change from \$2,700,000 per year, to \$1,000,000 per year!
 - I'm not sure how many companies can survive that kind of fallout.
- The Impact:
 - We provide healthcare coverage to our associates and to their families. Several of our associates, we are their only option for healthcare as their spouses do not work or do not qualify. This creates additional dependency on social support.
 - This will be an additional strain to an already strained workforce for PT, OT, and SLP's (and assistants). We currently have openings for a Physical Therapist and a Physical Therapist Assistant due to an increased demand, which we are having a difficult time hiring due to the competitive marketplace.
- Rising Costs:
 - Traveling professionals (nursed, therapists) are now one of the highest employment sectors in many hospitals. The only reason to use travelers is because there is a huge shortage in professionals locally to do the job. These are high-cost associates, driving up salaries of local nurses and therapists to retain them locally and long term.
 - Replacement Costs: Therapist departure due to choosing not to vaccinate will create new open positions. Our cost to hire a new therapist is 20% higher wage and benefits compared to a therapist with 20+ years of patient care experience.
- This is a strain felt particularly hard by small medical businesses. Our volume is smaller than the large, corporate owned chains. Therefore, on the scale our profits are less. This makes continuing as a small, independent, Ohio owned company more challenging. Other similar businesses choose to sell to large national companies. We are continuing to attempt to fight this trend.
- Mandates will have a similar effect on other small healthcare businesses as well. Home Health Agencies, physician offices, chiropractor offices, etc. will not be able to survive with fewer staff members.
- Fewer Providers. You will see a trend of more and more providers downsizing (Losing jobs) and opting out of the Medicare and Medicaid participation system. Your constituents will have to then travel a distance to find a provider who is overbooked, and who may not have treated the patient



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before, where we have treated the patient for the past 20 years through all their ailments. Where will all of these patients receive services?

In closing, this mandate puts us at risk of losing our business. If Northwest Physical Therapy shuts its operation, 60 families will not have weekly income, healthcare benefits, social security benefits, retirement, etc.; AND 50,000 patient visits will have to be absorbed by other organizations, already strained.

Thank you for your time and efforts on our behalf!

Yours In Health,

Wanda Dean, MSPT, Owner

Brian Dean, MSPT, Owner

Todd Hanneman, Executive Director

Northwest Physical Therapy, Inc.