

Client Services Policy Manual

Policy Number: **HC-01**
Subject: **Physiotherapy Services - Private Clinics**
Chapter: **Health Care Services**

Definitions

Physiotherapy: is the application of professional physical therapy in the assessment and treatment of the human body in order to achieve optimal function by the use of suitable therapeutic methods including mobilization, manipulation and the use of physical agents.

Memorandum of Agreement: an agreement made between a private physiotherapy clinic and WorkplaceNL which governs the provision of physiotherapy services to injured workers.

Recurrence: a return of disabling symptoms, directly related to an original work injury which resulted in loss of earning capacity, more than twelve months after the worker was last considered capable of earning. Whether an injury is a recurrence is the decision of WorkplaceNL.

Reinstatement: a reinstatement occurs when a worker experiences a return of symptoms within 12 months of either returning to work (fully or in a limited capacity) or being considered capable of work. Whether an injury is a reinstatement is the decision of WorkplaceNL.

Policy Statement

WorkplaceNL is committed to providing health services for injured workers that facilitate early and safe return to work. In funding private physiotherapy services, WorkplaceNL values and promotes treatment programs which focus on:

- Early intervention;
- Controlled, progressive, active exercise and functional activity;
- Education that emphasizes the worker's responsibility in the healing, therapy, return to work and prevention processes;
- Early identification and notification of problems that will not be helped by, or interfere with, physiotherapy treatment;
- The hierarchy of return to work and accommodation consistent with Policy RE-18 Hierarchy of Return to Work and Accommodation; and
- Effective communication between the health care provider, the workplace parties and WorkplaceNL consistent with the principles of the early and safe return to work provisions of the Workplace Health, Safety and Compensation Act, 2022.

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General

Health Care Entitlement for Physiotherapy

Physiotherapy is a recognized form of health care and covered by WorkplaceNL when:

Either:

- The worker avails of services on a self-referral basis; or
- Services are referred for the compensable condition by the treating physician or nurse practitioner,

And:

- Services are provided by a physiotherapist licensed, registered and in good standing with the Newfoundland and Labrador College of Physiotherapists and the clinic is registered by the Newfoundland and Labrador College of Physiotherapists; and
- A Memorandum of Agreement has been signed between WorkplaceNL and the physiotherapy clinic.

Earnings loss benefits may be reduced, suspended or terminated where an injured worker misses physiotherapy treatments without a legitimate reason or is noncompliant with the treatment plan. Policy EN-17 Interruptions and Delays in Work Injury Recovery or RE-02 The Goal of Early and Safe Return to Work and the Roles of the Parties will be used to guide decisions in these cases.

Treatment Authorization and Duration

WorkplaceNL supports early access to appropriate health care services that are necessary as a result of the work injury through the following:

- Coverage for physiotherapy may be on a self-referral basis.
- The worker is expected to contact a physiotherapy clinic within 72 hours of receiving a referral from a physician or nurse practitioner.
- The physiotherapy clinic is expected to start treatment within five business days from the date of initial contact.
- The physiotherapy clinic must immediately report any delays in treatment to WorkplaceNL.
- WorkplaceNL will make every effort to ensure that delays in obtaining treatment are addressed and resolved as soon as possible.

Client Services Policy Manual

Policy Number: **HC-01**
Subject: **Physiotherapy Services - Private Clinics**
Chapter: **Health Care Services**

To avoid delays in treating injured workers, automatic approval is granted by WorkplaceNL for up to **12** treatments, upon receipt of the initial Physiotherapy Report. Where physiotherapy begins in good faith and it is later determined the worker's claim is not accepted, WorkplaceNL will pay the physiotherapy clinic for treatments provided up to the date of notification to the clinic.

Physiotherapy continuation requests beyond **12** treatments must be made in writing to WorkplaceNL using the Physiotherapy Report.

Physiotherapy continuation requests beyond **12** treatments will only be considered where:

- Evidence from outcome measures data indicates that functional improvement has occurred and further functional improvement is likely; and
- Continued treatment will result in the worker remaining in or returning to the workforce.

All requests for extensions require approval from WorkplaceNL.

Where in the judgment of the physiotherapist, an injured worker is non-compliant with the treatment plan, including missing appointments, the clinic must notify WorkplaceNL in writing within one business day.

Recurrences and Reinstatements

A physician or nurse practitioner referral will be required for physiotherapy treatment of recurrences where it has been more than 12 months since the worker was last considered capable of earning due to the original work injury. Where the injured worker experiences a return of symptoms within 12 months and therefore falls within the reinstatement provisions of Policy EN-03 Recurrences, WorkplaceNL shall initially pay for a maximum of six treatments with or without a physician or nurse practitioner referral, prior to an entitlement decision. Refer to Policy EN-03 Recurrences for details on recurrences and reinstatements.

Reporting and Fees

Reporting requirements and fees payable for physiotherapy services shall be set by WorkplaceNL.

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Merits and Justice

Where the individual circumstances of a case are such that the provisions of this procedure cannot be applied or to do so would result in an unfair or unintended result, WorkplaceNL will decide the case based on its individual merits and justice as outlined by Policy EN-22 Merits and Justice. Such a decision will be considered for that specific case only and will not be precedent-setting.

Reference:

Workplace Health, Safety and Compensation Act, 2022, Section 95, 96 and 100.

Physiotherapy Act

Memorandum of Agreement for the Provision of Physiotherapy Services to Injured Workers

Policies:

EN-03 Recurrences

EN-22 Merits and Justice

EN-17 Interruptions and Delays in Work Injury Recovery

RE-02 The Goal of Early and Safe Return to Work

RE-18 Hierarchy of Return to Work and Accommodation

Amendment History

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