PT 713 – Professional Advocacy Project
House of Dukelegates

2024 Main Motion

Proposed by Team: 8

Cosponsored by (Team, SIG/Club Faculty):
Teams: 11, 9, 7, 1
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Main Motion Title: RC 8-24 CHARGE: PURSUE TELEVISION AND FILM VENTURES TO PROMOTE REPRESENTATION OF PHYSICAL THERAPY IN THE MEDIA

Motion: That the American Physical Therapy Association pursues opportunities to increase and improve the portrayal of the physical therapy profession to include physical therapists in prominent healthcare-based media, such as television and film, in order to demonstrate their scope of practice, increase awareness about the profession, and accurately depict rehabilitation in various settings.

Support Statement:
The goal of this motion is to improve public perception of physical therapy by reaching the general population through television and film. These forms of media are commonly consumed by much of the general public. Currently, many television shows exist about the medical field and are incredibly popular within our culture. A great example of this is the popular television show Grey's Anatomy. In 2022, a new season of Grey's Anatomy received 8.7 million viewers during the 7 days after the premiere across streaming platforms.[1] A study cites the impact of the show on increasing the positive perceptions of physicians. Specifically, the qualities of courageousness and patient satisfaction were shown to be more associated with each other following the show's debut.[2] Despite there being many existing programs surrounding different healthcare settings, a majority of them do not include characters or plot lines that represent physical therapy as a profession. A larger percentage of the population would be easily reached by pursuing opportunities to improve and increase this representation of physical therapy within the media.

An example of this could be introducing physical therapy characters and plot lines to television programs that currently exist, or creating new programs, could improve knowledge and awareness of the scope of a physical therapist. Exposing the general public to the idea of what physical therapists do in different settings and the demand for physical therapy treatment could

greatly increase interest in the field. If the general public can relate to characters on a television show seeking treatment from a physical therapist, they may better understand the value of the profession and how physical therapy can potentially serve them. Beyond this, an advertisement for the "Choose PT" movement can be included to encourage the public to seek more information about how physical therapy can be beneficial to their lives. While this is just one example of how physical therapy could be better represented in the media, there are numerous ways this venture can be accomplished. Since the current representation of the profession in these forms of media is minimal, this is a great opportunity to have a large impact in this area. However, there are opportunities to start small and grow potential ventures with increased success. By directly advocating via social media to the creators of these shows/films is a great first step to beginning this conversation.

Pursuing opportunities to increase physical therapy representation in the media creates an easily digestible, readily available, and easily accessible way to educate the public on the scope of the profession. With increased knowledge of what the role of a physical therapist is in multiple healthcare settings, there could be an increase in the excitement of younger generations to become physical therapists.

References:

1. Porter, Rick. "'Grey's Anatomy' Fall Finale Soars in Multi-Platform Viewing." *The Hollywood Reporter*, The Hollywood Reporter, 23 Nov. 2022, www.hollywoodreporter.com/tv/tv-news/greys-anatomy-fall-finale-tv-ratings-1235268954/.
2. Quick, Brian. (2009). The Effects of Viewing Grey's Anatomy on Perceptions of Doctors and Patient Satisfaction. Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media. 53. 38-55. 10.1080/08838150802643563.

Relevance to APTA Strategic Plan: Demand Access

Relevance to Guiding Principles of the APTA Vision:
Collaboration, Innovation, Access/Equity

Link(s) to Current Position/Standard/Guideline/Policy/Procedure:
None

Link(s) to other relevant background information:
Staying On Message: Public Perceptions of Physical Therapy
APTA Consumer Awareness Report Shows Deepening Knowledge of Physical Therapy