

**Direct Access to Physical Therapy**  
**By: Craig D. Rigney, PT, Director of Rehabilitation**

The field of Physical Therapy achieved a monumental milestone late last year. Governor George Pataki signed a bill allowing the public to legally see a physical therapist without having a prescription from a physician or other health care provider. New York is now the 43<sup>rd</sup> state to have this benefit. The goal of this law is to ensure a quick intervention to speed up the healing process, in addition to saving the public, and HMO's money.

To ensure quality of care, and cost effective treatment, there are some provisions of the law. The public can see a licensed physical therapist for 10 visits, or the duration of 30 days, which ever comes first. In addition, the licensed physical therapist must have a minimum of 3 years experience in their clinical realm.

Not every insurance company will pay for physical therapy services without a prescription, so please contact Gananda-Walworth Physical Therapy, or your local physical therapist, to find out if you have coverage. Insurance policies are always evolving, and currently policies that do not require a referral, such as Preferred Care and some Blue Cross-Blue Shield policies, will cover services.

Direct access to physical therapy was a bill signed to ensure more accessibility for the public when a movement related problem exists. Do not hesitate to utilize this expanded service in a time when it appears all we see are cuts. If you have a musculoskeletal problem, and are unsure if physical therapy will help, please contact us.

*The above is intended as general information only. Be sure to contact your physician for advice or your own specific medical problems. Have a question? Write to Questions from the Field, Gananda-Walworth Physical Therapy and Village Fitness, PO Box 162, Macedon, NY 14502, or send e-mail to [gwpt@villagefit.com](mailto:gwpt@villagefit.com).*