

## Physical Therapists Take Their Message to Consumers

Editorial Staff

The latest ad from the APTA is this full page spread in the July, 1997 issue of Better Homes and Gardens, ranked fourth in circulation of North American magazines with over 7.6 million readers.

According to a workforce study commissioned by the American Physical Therapy Association (APTA), the United States will have an 11% surplus of physical therapists (PTs) by the year 2000, and expanding to 20-30% by 2007:

"The outlook for physical therapy is not what it used to be," said APTA President Marilyn Moffat, PT, PhD. "We expect that the employment market for physical therapy will become more competitive, salaries may level off, recent graduates may not get their first choice of location or practice opportunity, and physical therapists may seek or develop opportunities in nontraditional settings."

The APTA currently represents more than 72,000 PTs, PT assistants and students. The same study predicts that the number of physical therapists and physical therapist assistants will continue to grow at annual rates of 5 and 11 percent respectively.

In response to the burgeoning number of PTs, the APTA has launched an aggressive advertising campaign aimed at broadening the public's perception of physical therapy. The campaign includes advertisements in the Wall Street Journal and USA Today featuring President Clinton. The White House legal council forced the APTA to pull the ads, but not before they ran several times.

The latest ad from the APTA is a full page spread in the July, 1997 issue of Better Homes and Gardens, ranked fourth in circulation of North American magazines with over 7.6 million readers. The ad copy reads:

"Your Back Will Tell You that Sister Anne Marie Was Right

Poor posture is every bit as unhealthy as Sister Anne Marie always said it was. As a matter of fact, it could even be causing your back pain. Fortunately, a physical therapist can help with evaluation and treatment.

Today licensed physical therapists provide hands-on help for every part of the body to everyone from infants to the elderly. They give care and counseling on rehabilitation, exercise, and the prevention of injury and disease. And you'll find them advising on proper posture and body motion in the workplace, treating injuries, consulting on fitness, and administering physical therapy in the home.

For more information and a brochure on back pain, call 1-800-955-7848."

Notice that the APTA has positioned physical therapists as providing "hands-on help for every part

of the body," and is not shy to say they treat "everyone from infants to the elderly." Notice also the mention of PTs still making house calls.

When a readers calls the toll free number, they hear a recorded message that offers two publications:

Put Your Health in the Hands of a Physical Therapist

Taking Care of Your Back

Today's health care wars are being waged on the plains of public opinion. Yes, there are some victories to be had in the murky world of legislation, or in the treacherous and drawn-out dog fights of litigation, but the survival of a profession is largely established on the "ground," patient by patient.

The APTA has recognized the importance of educating the public in their efforts to grow and flourish. The chiropractic profession will have to dedicate even greater resources if it hopes to maintain the musculoskeletal high ground.

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