



## CLINICAL HIGHLIGHT: PSORIATIC ARTHRITIS



August marks **Psoriasis Action Month**, which is focused on remembering that psoriasis affects people of all walks of life and impacts the entire body system.

Every year, the National Psoriasis Foundation (NPF) celebrates Psoriasis Awareness Month to create awareness and provide information about this common skin disorder, which affects at least 100 million people worldwide.

### What is Psoriasis?

Psoriasis is an immune-mediated disease (a disease with an unclear cause that is characterized by inflammation caused by dysfunction of the immune system) that causes inflammation in the body. There may be visible signs of the inflammation, such as raised plaques (plaques may look different for different skin types) and scales on the skin.

**More than 3% of the U.S. adult population is affected by this condition, more than 7.5 million individuals.**

As with other chronic diseases, psoriasis may affect areas of an individual's life other than their physical health. One common physical result, however, is psoriatic arthritis (PsA).

### Psoriatic Arthritis (PsA):

Psoriatic arthritis (PsA) is a chronic, inflammatory disease of the joints and where tendons and ligaments connect to bone. Like psoriasis, PsA is associated with related health conditions (comorbidities). Symptoms may include:

- Fatigue
- Tenderness, pain and swelling over tendons
- Swollen fingers and toes that sometimes resemble sausages
- Stiffness, pain, throbbing, swelling and tenderness in one or more joints
- Reduced range of motion
- Morning stiffness and tiredness
- Nail changes, such as pitting or separation from the nail bed
- Redness and pain of the eye (uveitis)
- There is little connection between psoriasis severity and PsA severity. You could have few skin lesions but many joints affected by arthritis.

(Source: [National Psoriasis Foundation](#))

### Informative Articles and Resources:

[Psoriatic Arthritis – John Hopkins Medicine](#)

[Life with Psoriasis – National Psoriasis Foundation](#)

[Living with Psoriatic Arthritis – National Psoriasis Foundation](#)

[Psoriasis Action Month – National Psoriasis Foundation](#)

[Late-Onset and Elderly Psoriatic Arthritis: Clinical Aspects and Management – Drugs & Aging](#)

DID YOU KNOW?

Psoriatic arthritis affects about 30% of people with psoriasis.

(Mease et al., 2013)

## Supporting Complex Care for Patients with Psoriatic Arthritis



Living with psoriatic arthritis can bring a variety of challenges as everyday tasks may become more difficult over time—due to joint pain and stiffness.

As a complement, physical and occupational therapy help strengthen a person’s muscles around affected joints, increase flexibility and range of motion. Therapy also helps protect joints from further damage.

Physical Therapists or Occupational Therapists can assess an individual’s abilities and find ways to make moving easier. A treatment plan is tailored to the specific needs, strengths, and weaknesses of a patient and is based on which joints are affected. For instance, some people with psoriatic arthritis experience pain in their knees, others

have it in their hands, and for some, the joints in the spine may be inflamed.

At Advanced Therapy solutions, our interdisciplinary Therapy Team (IDT) works together to provide personalized care for patients with psoriatic arthritis by focusing on their individual care and therapy needs.

When thinking about psoriatic arthritis, our team first determines the mobility needs of the individual in order to develop a customized therapy plan that will address the following:

- **Energy conservation modifications** to protect joints when performing a task as well as developing an overall strategy and schedule for prioritizing ADLs
- **Increased energy and flexibility** through strengthening, stretching, and aerobic exercises
- **Adaptability** – The use of assistive devices that can help perform daily tasks

The goal is to reduce pain, restore or improve mobility, make it easier to perform ADLs and prevent disability.

ATS Physical Therapists and Occupational Therapists are integral members of the Interdisciplinary Team to support patients in their journey to a healthier life. [Contact us](#) to learn more.

### Informative Articles and Resources

[Psoriatic Arthritis Tips From Physical and Occupational Therapists – Everyday Health](#)

[Psoriatic Arthritis – Johns Hopkins Medicine](#)

[Psoriasis and Psoriatic Arthritis FAQ Video – Johns Hopkins Medicine](#)

## Leadership Recommendations

- The Interdisciplinary Team (IDT) should work closely together to develop a person-centered approach to patient assessment and care planning to ensure personalized care for each individual.
- Provide team members with appropriate training and resources to support competencies regarding therapy approaches for patients with psoriatic arthritis.
- IDT should identify achievable goals to make mobility easier for their patients.
- Encourage patients to participate in their plan of care that is customized to their specific needs and goals.
- Provide education to patients and families regarding the importance of lifestyle changes and monitoring risk factors to help treat psoriatic arthritis and increase and increase their quality of life.

## Advocate for Physical Therapy

On July 13, 2021, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) issued a proposed rule that announces and solicits public comments on proposed policy changes for Medicare payments under the Physician Fee Schedule (PFS) and other Medicare Part B issues, on or after January 1, 2022.

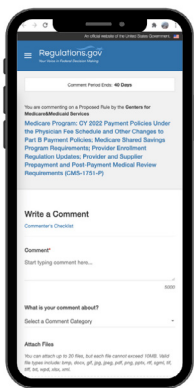
Highly impacting therapy services, the payment for outpatient therapy services furnished by physical therapist assistants will be reimbursed at 85% of the Medicare Physician Fee Schedule.



### Impact on Therapy Services

- Patients are at risk of losing access to therapy services.
- Given our current situation with the COVID-19 pandemic, patient need for PT services has increased and challenged the financial stability of providers.
- Decrease access to PT and PTAs leads to a decrease in fall prevention, increased use of opioids and an increase of costly medical procedures.

(Source: APTA)



## Take Action

PTAs play a crucial role in the PT-PTA team and help bridge the gap in access to care. Take a moment to share your concerns regarding the recent changes in the fee schedule through the following actions:

[Send Your Comments to CMS](#)

[Ask Congress To Fight the Cuts](#)

[Access APTA's Template Letter on the PTA Differential](#)

[#FightTheCut](#)

## More Legislative Updates

**House Appropriations Committee Advances Funding Legislation; Includes Significant Increases for IDEA, EHDI, and CSD Research** – On July 15, the U.S. House Appropriations Committee approved legislation to fund the Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services and Education for fiscal year (FY) 2022. The bill significantly increases funding for the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), boosts annual funding for the Early Hearing Detection and Intervention (EHDI) program, and raises resources for Communication Sciences and Disorders (CSD) and rehabilitation research.

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**CY 2022 HH PPS Proposed Rate Update** – This CMS proposed rule would set forth routine updates to the home health and home infusion therapy services payment rates for calendar year (CY) 2022 in accordance with existing statutory and regulatory requirements. Additionally, this rulemaking proposes to utilize the physical therapy LUPA add-on factor to establish the occupational therapy add-on factor for the LUPA add-on payment amounts; and make conforming regulations text changes to reflect that allowed practitioners are able to establish and review the plan of care. [Download the fact sheet.](#)

[Read More >>](#)



## Reflections from the ATS Team

“The therapy team as a whole aside from the patients are great to work with. We bond together as a team with potlucks, special activities for holidays, etc. We’re all hardworking and supportive of each other which is imperative to help our patients succeed.”

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**Advanced Therapy Solutions exists to inspire, encourage, and motivate patients to excellence in therapy. Every patient is unique to us. Therefore, each one is treated with care, support, and dignity as they strive to achieve their daily therapy goals. We pride ourselves on treating others as they want to be treated, for this is our ultimate measure of the quality of care in every respect.**

[Learn more about our services](#) | [info@ats-therapy.com](mailto:info@ats-therapy.com)

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