Workers' Comp

Specialty Solutions Spotlight: Six Ways to Improve Physical Therapy Outcomes in Workers' Compensation

February 12, 2026
3 MIN READ
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What can I do to ensure my physical therapy claims recover faster?

While managing workers' comp claims requires understanding the basics of physical therapy, achieving better claim outcomes can often hinge on how you influence when care starts, who delivers it and how closely progress is managed.

Below are six practical ways you can help physical therapy work harder for injured employees.

1. Act early to avoid small delays becoming big problems

It doesn't take much for recovery to lose momentum, and delays can quietly add days or weeks to a claim, making early engagement paramount.

- Ensure that initial physical therapy appointments are scheduled as quickly as possible
- Set expectations for documentation turnaround (evaluation and progress notes within 24 hours)
- Watch for signs and act quickly when missed visits, no-shows or scheduling gaps appear

2. Pay extra attention to transitions in care

As inpatient stays shorten and outpatient therapy starts earlier, transitions are more important than ever, especially in complex or catastrophic claims.

- Coordinate physical medicine planning before discharge whenever possible
- Confirm equipment, transportation and home readiness are in place before therapy starts
- Use specialty coordinators to manage logistics so clinical care is uninterrupted

3. Match the injury to the right level of expertise

Not every injury needs a specialist, but when one does, sending an injured employee to the wrong provider can cost time and money.

- Recommend complex injuries (hands, spines, post-surgical cases) be routed to therapists with proven experience in those areas
- Remember that finding the right care for any given injury may not be with the closest provider

4. Rely on evidence-based, work-focused therapy guidelines

You can make return-to-work decisions with confidence when treatment plans are clear, and progress is easy to measure.

- Align therapy expectations with evidence-based guidelines and injury-specific job function
- Watch for common warning signs like heavy reliance on passive treatments (heat, ice, TENS) or therapy that continue without meaningful functional gains
- Use utilization patterns, documentation and outcome history to guide ongoing authorization decisions

5. Get clinical input for decision support

You can get expert-based decision support by including a clinician who can evaluate whether therapy is needed, how much should be approved and if a patient is improving.

- Engage PT experts to recalibrate care plans when progress stalls
- Consider clinical recommendations to reduce unnecessary visits
- Access clinical peer review when cases raise clinical concerns

6. Keep progress and compliance visible

Even the best therapy plan only works if it’s followed. Visibility into treatment gives you the opportunity to step in before problems arise.

- Monitor attendance trends and missed visits
- Review progress notes tied to functional milestones promptly
- Watch for signs that treatment is drifting away from active, goal-driven rehab

Final Takeaway

By steering injured employees to the right providers, removing obstacles from access and transitions, and applying clinical insight, you can shorten recovery timelines while improving functional outcomes.

When you refer to Apricus to coordinate physical therapy needs, you get the expertise care coordinators and licensed physical therapists who enforce these crucial strategies on every claim to provide the best recovery

support possible.

This information is meant to serve as a general overview, and any specific questions should be fully reviewed with a health care professional or specialty service provider.

To make a referral for physical therapy or other specialty services, call 877.203.9899 or email apricus.referrals@enlyte.com .



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