

# The P1 Project

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Today marks the first formal announcement of the P1 Project - also known as the Physio One Project.

What exactly is the P1 Project? First, a little background is in order.

Physical therapists (otherwise know as physiotherapists or "physios" in most other countries worldwide) are faced with challenging times. In an era of health care reform, physical therapists are, without question, the practitioners of choice for the first line of assessment and treatment of musculoskeletal disorders, and in the prevention of injury and optimization of human performance. In many countries, patients have direct access to a physiotherapist, much as they would a doctor, osteopath, chiropractor, or massage therapist. They practice as autonomous providers in that they do not require a referral to see patients. This is considered the accepted standard of care in most countries. Armed with a unique perspective on health and human function, physical therapists have the education and clinical approach to enhance the health and health care spectrum.

Consumers are also not aware of "evidence-based practice" and how these issues affect their health care. All providers are not created equal - and some utilize evidence-based strategies far more than others. Again, it is in the best interests of the consumer to understand what these strategies are, and how they impact their care and provide better outcomes.

But the consumer simply doesn't know this. Consumer awareness of physical therapy - and the limiters to practice that are imposed on the profession from outside special interest groups - is low. If the consumers don't know the issues - then, well, the issues really don't exist in anyone's minds but our own. Thus begins a virtual cycle of "accepted standards of care" in the community, and the consumer simply doesn't have the information to understand the issues at hand and how they affect their quality of care, access to care, and cost of care.

Professional associations are, quite frankly, too busy putting money towards lobbyists. And lobbyists are too busy accepting these dollars. And while these factions continue to wage legislative battles that are driven by campaign dollars and broken promises, the consumer continues to suffer. A strong consumer voice is necessary.

With this in mind comes the formation of the P1 Project (<http://www.p1project.org> ). The mission of the Physio One Project is to promote consumer awareness and advocacy regarding the role, evidence, standards, and outcomes of physical therapy in both health and health care, injury recovery and injury prevention. This will focus on 2 key areas - promoting the autonomous practice of and direct access to physical therapists within the health care system (and the limiters that affect this), and promoting evidence-based practice within the scope of practice of physical therapy. The P1 Project will also aim to create a community of both consumers and providers to discuss these issues openly.

The P1 Project will not devote any finances to political campaigns. The P1 Project's primary goal is effective consumer awareness and advocacy, Consumers have votes - and votes decide legislators' fate. Let's make "evidence-based standards of care" the new community standard.

The next episode of "Consumer's Guide To Health" on Tuesday July 21, 2009 at 8:00 pm will discuss the role of the P1 Project, it's mission, and it's plan for consumer advocacy, The BlogTalkRadio call-in number is 646-929-1567. You can listen online at <http://www.blogtalkradio.com/abesselink> and also download this and previous episodes here as well.

I hope you will join us in the discussion and in supporting the P1 Project.

