

## **42% of Americans Feel Uncomfortable Paying Out-of-Pocket for Chronic Pain Treatment, ATI Physical Therapy National Survey Finds**

***However, employers are seeing a savings in offering physical therapy as a first option***

**Bolingbrook, Ill. | Aug. 4, 2020** – As the U.S economy continues to struggle to regain its footing and many Americans remain unemployed without healthcare benefits, seeking treatment for chronic musculoskeletal (MSK) pain is something a growing number of Americans aren't willing to pursue and pay for independently. A recent survey conducted by Harris Poll on behalf of ATI Physical Therapy (ATI) revealed that 42% of Americans would feel uncomfortable paying out of pocket for medical procedures or services to alleviate chronic MSK pain, despite high pain levels.

“The combination of precarious economic conditions and data indicating COVID-19 is still on the rise nationwide have created an uncertain marketplace for Americans to make healthcare decisions. This highlights the overall lack of awareness for [affordable options for diagnosis and treatment](#) of chronic pain issues,” said Dr. Charles Thigpen, PhD, PT, ATC, Sr Director of Practice Innovation & Analytics for ATI. “What patients with chronic pain may not know is that over 70% of MSK conditions can be diagnosed and effectively treated by physical therapists without other medical care – even virtually during these uncertain times.”

Physical therapy is a productive and cost-effective means of treating most musculoskeletal pain, and if used as a treatment option prior to visiting a primary care physician, can help patients avoid X-rays, MRIs, opioids and surgery – saving them both time and money in the long run. Additionally, physical therapists can also effectively triage patients to other specialists, if and when appropriate, to help ensure patients get the right treatment – at the right time.

[Studies](#) have shown that when patients go to physical therapy initially for back or neck pain it results in lower costs of care over the next year – up to \$1,550, while resulting in similar, if not better, improvements in patient outcomes. [Additional studies](#) have shown patients whom visit a PT earlier in the care process have lowered the probability of needing opioid prescriptions (89%), advanced imaging services (27%) and emergency department visits (14%).

Employers are also exploring alternative options for healthcare benefits due to rising costs and the volatility introduced by COVID-19. Many companies are now offering physical therapy as a covered treatment option in their insurance plans. In 2018, ATI Physical Therapy partnered with a large union in the Midwest through [ATI First](#) to deliver improved access to the right care at the right time through early physical therapy, resulting in a \$9.4 million reduction in associated MSK spend over the course of a year.

ATIFirst aims to partner directly with employers to decrease the overall cost of health care. Through creative and innovative direct contracting options, either in conjunction with, or outside of, the employers' health plan, all employees and their dependents can access PT, either onsite or at a community clinic, as a first option for MSK conditions. ATIFirst also offers on-site personnel for the purpose of preventative early intervention.

**Survey Method:** This survey was conducted online within the United States by The Harris Poll on behalf of ATI Physical Therapy from June 4-8, 2020 among 2,046 U.S. adults ages 18 and older. This online survey is not

based on a probability sample and therefore no estimate of theoretical sampling error can be calculated. For complete survey methodology, including weighting variables and subgroup sample sizes, please contact Clifton O'Neal.

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**About ATI**

At ATI Physical Therapy we are passionate about potential. Every day, we restore it in our patients and activate it our team members in our more than 850 locations across the U.S. With proven results from more than 2.5 million unique patient episodes, ATI is leading the industry by setting best practice standards that deliver predictable outcomes for our patients with musculoskeletal (MSK) issues. Designated as a Great Place to Work®, ATI's offerings span the healthcare spectrum for MSK-related issues. From preventative services in the workplace and athletic training support to home health, outpatient clinical services and online physical therapy via ATI CONNECT™, a complete list of our service offerings can be found at [ATIpt.com](http://ATIpt.com). ATI is based in Bolingbrook, Illinois.