

Press Release
For Immediate Release
January 12, 2007
CONTACT: Dr. Timothy Flynn
tflynn@regis.edu
Phone: 303-964-5137

PHYSICAL THERAPY FIRST – BEFORE OTHER EXPENSIVE ALTERNATIVES!

DENVER__An article on the front page of the Wall Street Journal's January 12, 2007 edition clearly acknowledges with what the American Academy of Orthopedic Manual Physical Therapy (AAOMPT) has been saying for years: “Before trying expensive alternatives, get patients into physical therapy first. You'll save millions of dollars and actually help the patient,” said Dr, Timothy W, Flynn, physical therapist and President of the American Academy of Orthopaedic Manual Physical Therapists (AAOMPT).

In the [WSJ article, entitled "A Novel Plan Helps Hospital Wean Itself Off of Pricey Tests"](#) (available for 7 days for non-subscribers), writer Vanessa Fuhrmans notes that a novel solution tested at Virginia Mason Medical Center in Seattle, “offers a lesson in dealing with one of the most confounding elements in America's health-care crisis: a perverse system of payments that rewards doctors and hospitals not for how well they treat patients, but for how much they treat them.”

The solution was crafted with the help of large employers Starbucks, Costco Wholesale Corp. and Nordstrom Inc. As doctors studied the course of treatment of dozens of patients at Virginia Mason's spine clinic, it was clear no standard procedures were being followed. In fact, Virginia Mason physicians had gotten into the habit of ordering an expensive MRI,

though uncomplicated back pain rarely warrants one.

Many patients had to wait a month for appointments and often were bounced from specialist to specialist. Eventually some patients were directed to physical therapy, and often only then began to feel relief.

Once the inefficiencies were mapped out on paper, the solution was clear to everyone: put the physical therapy in front. According to the article, "That's also what a lot of medical literature suggests. The hospital made the change, and also worked with its team of employers to eliminate extra steps in the medical maze for patients."

"That's been our philosophy all along," said Dr. Flynn,. "This article highlights that when it comes to low back pain; see your Physical Therapist first. It eliminates unnecessary tests, unproven surgeries, high costs, and most importantly provides a successful outcome while decreasing your likelihood of your symptoms returning."

The AAOMPT serves its members by promoting excellence in orthopaedic manual physical therapy practice, education and research, and collaborates with national and international associations. For more on AAOMPT and the value of physical therapy, go to:

<http://www.aaompt.org/>.