

Rehab Net News Update

R E H A B I L I T A T I O N N E T W O R K O F A R K A N S A S

Niche Markets Can Expand Your Practice Areas

A number of physical therapists across the country have found great success by identifying niche markets to expand their business. Stephen Clark, PT, DPT, MHS, OCS, MBA, began his career wanting to be the best physical therapists for whatever his patients needed but soon found it was easier to find one thing and do it well. Identifying a more precise market made it possible for him to expand his business, see more patients, and provide a valuable service to patients whose needs were not being satisfactorily met other places. After looking around his area he saw a lack of therapists specializing in foot and ankle problems. He then began taking ankle and foot courses to increase his knowledge of this area and soon he was receiving a plethora of ankle and foot referrals.

When picking a niche market like Clark, look where your passion is because you will naturally gravitate toward that anyway. Take the story of Jennifer Gamboa, PT, DPT, OCS. She is the owner of Body Dynamics, Inc. a successful, multi-disciplinary, cash-based business in Virginia. Gamboa is a former ballet and modern dancer. She began by working with people in the performing arts field. Her passion had been dance, and as a physical therapist as well as a former dancer, she knew that there was a need.

Much like Gamboa, Mark Hunter Hall, PT, found his niche working with Broadway performers. Prior to becoming a physical therapist, Hall was a Broadway performer for more than a dozen years. College athlete, Donald Miller, JR, PT, DPT, MS, CSCS, found his niche practice working with professional ice hockey players. He took his passion and now operates three clinics.

Whether your plans are to begin with a niche market or to just enter a new market, it is advisable to begin your exploration with a SWOT (strength, weakness, opportunities, and threats) analysis. Your first step in this process is to brainstorm and write down all internal strengths and weaknesses of the idea. A sample strength might be you know five physicians who think it's a great idea and are committed to refer to you, and you have a lot of patients who could benefit from this. Weakness might be insufficient staff, space or short of capital to buy needed equipment. The opportunities and threats are the external environment. So what is the opportunity out there? Is there an increasing needs trend out there? A current threat is the weakening economy. How will this effect your niche idea?

Before offering services to a select segment of the population, you should research the market in your area. Look at the demographics, are they conducive to your plan? What kind of competitors are already out there? Then develop a long range plan. Only after the proper research will you be successful. This is where you might find assistance through the Arkansas Small Business Development Center.

Finding your focus is often about networking to keep you apprised of opportunities that already exist. Take for example, Dave Powers, PT, MA, MBA, CEO and owner of Ultimate Rehab. Through Powers membership in the APTA he became aware of opportunities to work as a consultant with attorneys and insurance companies. He has found a niche in being an expert witness. In providing expert testimonies, Powers has been hired by police departments to review information and by insurance companies to provide consultation to determine how best to respond to a lawsuit. Powers has learned the importance of networking. "I'm a big one for building bridges," says Powers. "Get to know people. Network. Socialize. It opens doors for you. You never know who's going to help build a bridge," he stated in a recent interview with the PT Magazine. He also is a big proponent of word of mouth. When you excite people about your services, they will spread the word.

Niches Cont'd on page 4

BECKY'S SCHEDULE

- June 9 Forum in El Dorado
- June 12 Chiro Board Mtg
- June 16 CMSA Mtg
- June 27 Fun Day
- June 29 Comp Day

Important Numbers

Becky's Cell 479-858-2760

Lobbyists Bill Phillips
(501) 329-3111 or
Bradley Phillips
(501) 269-2723

HEES (501) 225-8077 for
calibration services

ArklaMed—Rick Pate
(870) 864-8896

AR State Board of PT
Web site <http://www.arptb.org>

ArPTA Web site <http://www.arpta.org>

APTA Web site <http://www.apta.org>

AFLAC Anneke Bollman
(479) 264-4623

Www.rehabnet-ar.com
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CLINICS IN THE SPOTLIGHT



Batesville Therapy
1310 Sidney Street
Batesville, AR 72501
(870) 612-7200

Bobby Denison, PT, and Scott Fredricks, OTR, are the co-owners of Batesville Therapy Clinic. They provide physical and occupational therapy, sports medicine/athletic training and industrial rehabilitation services. In addition, they are a multidisciplinary facility for neurological impairments, vestibular issues and treatment of the hand and upper extremities. They also service area schools with pediatric therapy services and athletic training services to the area high schools.

Their Staff includes Physical Therapists, Occupational Therapists, Physical Therapist Assistants, a Certified Athletic Trainer, Therapy Technicians, Receptionists, Billing Department Personnel, and an Operations Director.

Batesville Therapy Clinic is located in a 6000 sq feet building with state of the art gym and treatment facility.

Part of their industrial rehab program is the capabilities to provide functional capacities testing to determine if their patients are ready to return to work. They use the Matheson System for performing FCE's

To help their patients continue to progress after therapy they offer gym memberships as a way to transition them. For a nominal monthly fee, the patients can continue using the gym equipment to continue increasing strength, endurance, and flexibility. They can come to the clinic during the lunch hour and staff is on hand to assist them with questions and plans to optimize their health.

Bobby and Scott share this testimonial with us. "Shortly after the opening of their new business, Batesville Therapy Clinic began what would be the treatment of my entire family. They have successfully treated my grandmother's wrist after surgery when it was shattered due to a fall. My mom has received treatment after bilateral carpal tunnel surgery as well as pre-op & post-op therapy for her rotator cuff surgery. My dad's therapy on his back allowed his doctor to cancel the surgery he was scheduled to have. As for me, they got me back going after a severe ankle sprain and also a problem with my collar bone joint. Thanks guys for always being there to keep all of us up and going," by Tyler.



Central AR Sports
Medicine
2400 Crestwood
Suite 107
No. Little Rock, AR
72116
(501) 758-1300

Bo Renshaw, PT, ATC, is the owner of Central AR Sports Medicine and is the current president of Rehab Net of AR. Bo describes his clinic as family oriented and patient oriented. Being both a physical therapist and an athletic trainer, Bo treats a lot of sports injuries but he provides treatment to a wide variety of injuries and problems.

Bo says, "at Central AR Sports Medicine, we have one simple goal: to provide personalized, effective rehabilitation programs so you can return to full function quickly and safely. It's a simple premise: We want you to overcome your injury or impairment just as much as you do, and we'll do what it takes to help you get there. No matter what your problem is, we'll give it our best."

Kathy Borrelli, PT, OMPT, works along side Bo at Central AR Sports Medicine. Kathy states, "I appreciate the ability to share ideas with other therapists concerning patient treatments. We all have had different experiences in our careers, and each patient is an individual, so a technique or treatment that worked well with one person may not be the best for another. Having a good working environment where there are other colleagues to brainstorm with on how to help a patient is important to me, and I feel that I have that environment at Central Arkansas Sports Medicine."

Some of the services they offer include manual therapy, athletic training, cardiovascular fitness, custom shoe inserts, FCE, work conditioning, osteoporosis prevention, balance training, gate training, strength and endurance training and MedX.

Bo shared this testimonial with us. "I met Bo Renshaw after my son experienced his second brain surgery. We were afraid Chad wasn't going to be able to continue the kind of rehabilitation he received as an inpatient at BRI. In fact, Chad's neurologist told him that he had gone as far as he could. But It was clear after a few visits with Bo that he had Chad's best interests at heart. He was able to suggest a personalized routine, and he worked with Chad one-on-one to accomplish Chad's goal of regaining the use of the left side of his body. As you can probably imagine, we were surprised when Chad called us from the top of Pinnacle Mountain. He had a lot to be proud of. Central Arkansas Sports Medicine had given him exactly what he needed."

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Letter From the Editor

Rehab Net's Annual Fun and Game Day is just around the corner. We will be returning to Wild River Country by popular demand on June 27th. Maybe by then the rain will slack off and give us a good day for playing at the water park.

I am busy thinking of witty things to say as I call the Bingo numbers and trying to decide what kind of whacky things we can do for prizes. We are having cash prizes for our Bingo again this year as that went over so well before. We will also be giving away a couple of season passes provided by our friends at Wild River Country and \$100 cash for door prizes.

Please let your employees all know they are invited and to contact me for tickets. The cost to attend this year is \$7.50 a person and for that they get entrance to the park, lunch catered by Corky's, extended drink services till 3:30pm at our pavilion, a chance at prizes, and BINGO. There is something for everyone.

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RAC's (cont'd from page 5)

5. In front of an ALJ? Speak in laymen's terms. If it comes down to you fighting for your money in higher levels of appeals, watch how you present your case. An administrative law judge probably doesn't have a medical or rehab background. Do not assume the ALJ is as knowledgeable about your patients and their care as you do. Paint a picture of the person and what is going on. Don't use jargon such as ADLs, transfers, SOAP Notes, and isometrics. As everyday as they sound to you, they won't to the judge. Don't even assume the judge knows anything about Medicare coverage criteria. You may be facing a judge who has never done a rehab case before, so you don't want to start talking about how you fulfilled coverage criteria until you explain that the coverage criteria are.

6. Don't relax to soon. You may have heard the stories of all the rehab appeals won at the ALJ level during the RAC pilot project. Although this is a high level in the appeals process, it's not the last. "We are finding multiple cases where the Medicare appeals council is overturning ALJ decisions," Johnson points out.

So don't breathe a sign of relief until all five levels of appeals are exhausted.

Niches—Cont'd from Page 1

If you identify a potential niche, find someone who has already done it, and ask whether the PT with the niche experience would be willing to be a mentor. APTA has an excellent Mentor Program available to its members. You can go on the www.apta.org website to view potential mentors in your area of interest.

Robert DuVall, PT, DHSc, MMSc, ATC, OCS, FAAOMPT, CSCS, President and director of the orthopedic manual fellowship program at Sports Medicine of Atlanta, has developed a focus in the worker's compensation field. However, unlike many physical therapists who work with patients only after they are injured, DuVall works with employers to help prevent injuries. He goes to the company plants and evaluates workers to identify movement impairments before injuries occur. The typical workers comp claim cost the company an average of \$24,000 therefore just preventing a few injuries can save the company a large amount of money. Not to mention the effect on moral that the employer is taking an interest in their employees.

Another niche market is senior living centers. DuVall suggests that interested PTs explore this opportunity by approaching the center's director of

recreation or the director of activities. Offer to use a functional outcomes tool to assess people's risk for falls. If you determine the person is at risk for fall, you then can perform a full evaluation. You then communicate with the person's physician to ask for a referral, if needed, to work on fall or risk factor impairment. You have the added perk that if you identify other risk factors outside of the scope of physical therapy, you then can refer to their physician, which strengthens your relationship with the physician.

Other niches include balance services and wound care. Therapists often get involved in wound care after a problem already exist but why not get involved with providing education on wound care to nursing homes, skilled care facilities, and home health agencies.

There are plenty of opportunities out there. It is not necessary to find new niches but to find unfulfilled niches in your area.



FOR MORE INFORMATION

APTA OFFERS MANY RESOURCES FOR PTS WHO MAY BE INTERESTED IN EXPLORING NEW OPPORTUNITIES.

Members Mentoring Members: A free APTA member benefit designed as an informal and flexible program. Mentors and protégés determine the scope of mentorship. Volunteer mentors can help with career, clinical, and professional issues. The program is available to all members—students, new professional, experienced professionals, PTs and PTAs. Go to www.apta.org, then click “Membership and Leadership,” then “Member Benefits and Services.”

Practice Management Consultant Network of the APTA Consulting Service: The PMCN links members with qualified consultants who can provide personalized guidance on a wide range of practice management issues at competitive rates. Go to www.apta.org, then click “Membership and Leadership,” then “Member Benefits and Services.”

Publications: APTA's Online Bookstore offers a variety of publications to help PTs identify and develop practice areas. Among them are: *Business Skills in Physical Therapy: Defining Your Business*; *Business Skills in Physical Therapy: Legal Issues*; and *Business Skills in Physical Therapy: Strategic Marketing*. For more information, go to www.apta.org, then click “Publications,” then “Other,” the “Resource Catalog.”

SLPs Going Independent in July? Don't Miss These Business Details

(reprinted from Eli Rehab Reports, Vol. 16, No. 6, Page 45)

If you are thinking about hiring a speech therapist, here are a few things you might need to know from Kate Romanow, director of health care advocacy for the American Speech-Language Hearing Association, on ASHA's website.

Question: What kind of practice or group can a SLP form or join to bill Medicare directly?

Answer: An SLP may provide services as 1) an unincorporated solo practice, partnership, or group practice, or a professional corporation or other incorporated speech pathology practice; 2) an employee of a physician group; or 3) an employee of a group that is not a professional corporation.

These are per Title 42 of the Code of Federal Regulations S410.62, Romanow said.

Question: Where can an SLP offer their services?

Answer: An SLP may offer it in their own private office space, "provided that the space is owned, rented, or leased by and used exclusively for the practice," Romanow said. You can also offer your services in the patient's home (and that does not include any hospital, critical access hospital, or skilled nursing facility). Also, "a private office space is not required if the SLP sees patients only in their homes," Romanow clarified.

Question: What practice regulations should I follow for a private practice type of setting?

Answer: "The new regulations mirror those governing therapists' participation in Medicare Part B but do not allow the use of assistants," Romanow said.

Note: The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services just released transmittals 106 and 1717 with specific guidelines for SLPs in private practice. *The good news:* These guidelines are the same as what PTs and OTs in private practice adhere to, confirms Mark Kander, director of Health care regulatory analysis for ASHA. To view the transmittals, see www.cms.hhs.gov/transmittals/downloads/R106BP.pdf and www.cms.hhs.gov/transmittals/downloads/R1717CP.pdf

6 Steps to Prepare You for the RAC Audit Onslaught

(excerpts taken from Eli Rehab Reports, Vol. 16, No. 6, Page 44)

All Rehab providers can expect Recovery Audit Contractors to scrutinize their Medicare Claims. Stay one step ahead with these six expert-recommended steps.

1. Use Benchmarks. RACs are likely to target outliers for review, so you'll want to know if you're on that list, recommends Tom Boyd with Rohnert Park, CA-based Boyd & Nicholas. Know your peers' state and national benchmarks as compared to your own. You can obtain benchmark information from the AR Small Business Development Center (<http://asbdc.ualr.edu/>).

2. Act fast on record requests. If a RAC contacts

you with a medical records request, you have 45 days to submit your data, or you get an automatic denial.

While this looks like a lot of time, many are missing this deadline. Plan ahead, "Make sure that you have all of your processes in place and all of your documentation in order so that if auditors are addressing issues you don't feel are substantial, you're ready for the appeal process," counsels Cherilyn G. Murer, JD, CRA, president and CEO of Murer Consultants in Joliet, IL. "In these early days, the appeal process is critical; this is the time to be aggressive with the audit and with the

appeal because we're setting the stage at this time."

3. Give your documentation practices a makeover. You have to over-exaggerate documentation relevant to medical necessity," Murer stresses. "We've always said documentation is important, but right now it is at the essence of our survival."

4. Build your appeals ammunition on solid ground. For an effective appeals battle, build your arguments on Medicare payment criteria; say how your claims fulfilled specific criteria. Reference the Medicare Benefits Policy Manual where applicable.

If you choose to appeal a RAC denial, develop a "criteria-based summary," Tim Johnson, executive director of Denver-based consulting firm, Castle Rock Medical Group. "The courts have held that when Medicare has specific criteria it must use that criteria to evaluate cases." So take the medical records and the documentation you want to appeal, line it up next to your reimbursement criteria, and build a case summary that points to how each requirement was met.

RAC's cont'd on p.3

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Congress Works a Miracle: FY 2010 Budget Resolution Passes

Congress has passed a \$3.4 trillion federal budget for fiscal year 2010, and healthcare was a key focus—but a controversial one at that.

The House passed the budget by a 233-193 vote on April 2, followed by the Senate with a vote of 53-43 just hours later.

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-CA) stated in a Washington Post article, “It honors the three pillars of the Obama initiatives: energy, healthcare, and education. The Republicans were not happy with the budget and none voted in favor of it. The Post reported that the budget does not address how to pay for Obama’s health care plan, which is expected to cost more than \$1 trillion over the next decade.

Medicare physician’s payments will not be offset for two years and the bill does not offer a long term physician pay fix as yet.

“While the budget resolution takes important steps in the near-term of cutting the deficit...it is clear that more will be needed to address the long-term fiscal imbalance confronting the nation beyond the five year budget window,” said Senate Budget Chairman Kent Conrad (D-ND). At the same time, “this budget is a major accomplishment,” Conrad acknowledged.

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