

PHYSICAL THERAPY & AI: AN OPERATIONAL PERSPECTIVE

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Optimizing Clinical Excellence through Technology

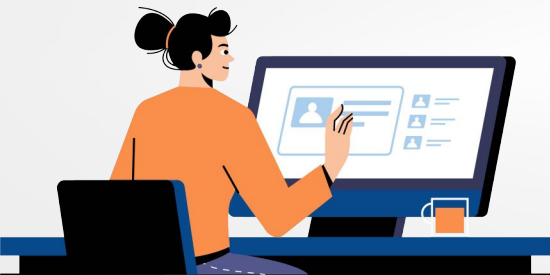
SESSION OBJECTIVES

The background features a large, faint graphic of a target with an arrow hitting the bullseye. In the foreground, there is a checklist icon with a yellow border and green checkmarks, positioned over the target graphic.

- **Understand how AI supports outpatient PT operations**
- **Identify clinical and compliance risks**
- **Evaluate AI tools strategically**
- **Build a responsible AI framework for your organization**

The Current Administrative Burden in PT

- ▶ Authorization management and appeals
- ▶ Coding accuracy and payer variability
- ▶ Documentation demands and EMR changes
- ▶ Keeping pace with evidence-based practice
- ▶ Limited clinician and support staff bandwidth



The goal is to provide care with clinical excellence and effective outcomes.

90.8%

of providers agree or strongly agree that administrative burden contributes to burnout



Where AI Can Reduce Operational Friction

- ▶ Documentation completeness and clarity
- ▶ Strengthening medical necessity language
- ▶ Appeal letter assistance
- ▶ Coding cross-checks
- ▶ Workflow automation support

Post-Implementation Operational Impact

- ▶ Faster sign-off times
- ▶ Improved documentation completeness
- ▶ Clearer demonstration of skilled care
- ▶ Increased confidence in payer communication
- ▶ Reduced cognitive load for clinicians

Clinical Operational Perspective

Ripple Effect:

- Reduced the Authorization Department
- Improved handoff
- More likely to appeal decisions
- Able to help out staff

AI as a Clinical Thinking Partner



- ▶ AI Supports - it does not replace - clinical reasoning
- ▶ Requires intentional prompt design
- ▶ Clinician validates all outputs
- ▶ Use AI to enhance reflection, not shortcut it

Designing Strong Clinical Prompts

- ▶ Include patient context and constraints
- ▶ Specify desired clinical focus (impairment vs function)
- ▶ Ask for differential considerations
- ▶ Cross-check against CPGs and payer standard

Risks of Technology-Augmented Care

- ▶ Cognitive offloading (“Checkbox card”)
- ▶ Reflection gaps
- ▶ Over-reliance on templated phrasing
- ▶ Loss of individualized clinical voice

Operational Safeguards



- ▶ Mandatory clinical sign-off
- ▶ Weekly case reflection checkpoints
- ▶ Audit AI-generated documentation
- ▶ Measure outcomes, satisfaction, and equity

Choosing the Right AI Tool

- ▶ Does it reduce burden or create more workflow steps?
- ▶ How is PHI stored and protected?
- ▶ Is there a human-in-the-loop review process?
- ▶ Does it align with compliance standards?

Business & Workflow Considerations

- ▶ Impact on staffing model
- ▶ Insurance verification accuracy
- ▶ Training investment required
- ▶ Clear ROI: time saved VS. cost

Why AI Adoption Fails



- ▶ Poor workflow integration
- ▶ Lack of training
- ▶ Distrust or fear of license impact
- ▶ Inconsistent policies or internet limitations

Framework for Clinical Decision Making



Privacy, Legal & Ethical Communication

- ▶ PHI protected and data storage
- ▶ Ownership of AI-processed material
- ▶ Subpoena and audit implications
- ▶ Patient consent and transparency



Documentation Dilemmas



- ▶ Miss non-verbal cues
- ▶ Risk of clinical skewing
- ▶ Must balance AI feedback with professional judgement
- ▶ Preserve clinician narrative integrity

Reframing AI in Physical Therapy

- ▶ AI strengths - not replaces - Clinical judgement
- ▶ Supports efficiency and pattern recognition
- ▶ Enhances operational performance
- ▶ Preserves professional autonomy

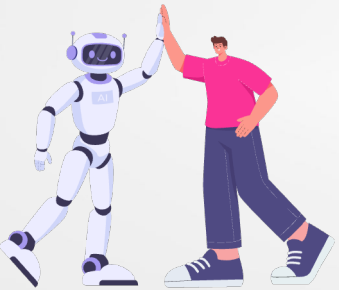
Implementation Framework for PT Practices

1. Define operational goals
2. Vet compliance and security standards
3. Train clinicians intentionally
4. Measure operational and patient outcomes
5. Continuously reassess impact



Closing: Responsible AI in PT Operations

- ✓ AI reduces administrative burden
- ✓ Policy must guide responsible use
- ✓ Balance advocacy with operational safety
- ✓ Clinical excellence remains the priority



Thank You!

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