

## PHYSIOTHERAPY AND PRIMARY HEALTH CARE

Musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs) are a leading cause of disability, and they place a substantial burden on primary care services in Canada. Every year, almost one-quarter of the Canadian population consults a primary care physician for MSDs. Yet most people with MSDs can be managed by a physiotherapist and do not need to see a physician. Physiotherapists deliver cost-effective interventions for people with MSDs, and they have a comprehensive knowledge of this field. Furthermore, physiotherapists can contribute to the promotion of healthy lifestyles and the prevention of chronic diseases, two main components of primary care services. Therefore, it is critical to ensure that physiotherapists are fully integrated into publicly funded primary care settings. However, integrating physiotherapists into interprofessional primary care teams in publicly funded settings is not common practice in Canada. Although there has been recent implementation of publicly funded models of physiotherapists in primary health care teams in Ontario, the extent to which similar models have been developed and/or evaluated elsewhere in Canada is unknown. These completed and ongoing projects explore the integration of physiotherapists in primary health care teams.

Research projects under this area of focus include:

### THE LIGHTHOUSE PROJECT

- Oosman S, Ogunsan\* M, Weber G, Bath B.(2018). [Enhancing access to physical therapy services for people experiencing poverty and homelessness: The Lighthouse Pilot Project.](#) (2019) *Physiotherapy Canada.* 71(2): 176-186.

### INTEGRATING PHYSIOTHERAPISTS INTO PUBLICLY FUNDED PRIMARY HEALTH CARE TEAMS: A NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN

- Currently in progress

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