

31 March 2020

Minister Zdrowia Łukasz Szumowski
sekretariat-ls@mz.gov.pl

Prezes Narodowego Funduszu Zdrowia Adam Niedzielski
sekretariat.prezes@nfz.gov.pl

Prezes AOTMiT Roman Topór-Mądry
sekretariat@aotm.gov.pl

Re: Role of physiotherapy in Poland during the COVID-19 pandemic

Dear Sirs

The World Confederation for Physical Therapy (WCPT) is the sole international organisation for physical therapy (also known internationally as physiotherapy), representing more than 625,000 physiotherapists worldwide through its 121 member organisations. WCPT was founded in 1951 and since 1956, it has been a non-governmental organisation (NGO) in official relations with the World Health Organisation.

WCPT is also a member of the World Health Professions Alliance (WHPA). WHPA brings together the global organizations representing the world's dentists, nurses, pharmacists, physiotherapists and physicians and speaks for more than 31 million health care professionals in more than 130 countries.

Poland has had a member of WCPT since 1967. The current member organisation is Krajowa Izba Fizjoterapeutów (KIF). WCPT recognises KIF as the sole authoritative voice for the physiotherapy profession in Poland. As a member organisation of WCPT, KIF has the responsibility to ensure standards for the education of physiotherapists, and standards of practice for physiotherapists in your country.

The association currently represents all 67,125 physiotherapists in Poland and is the fourth largest physiotherapy member organisation in the world.

It is the role of KIF to ensure that processes are in place to implement and monitor practice standards and to ensure that those wishing to practise physiotherapy in Poland do so in a manner which is safe and effective. It is the role of KIF to ensure that processes are in place to implement and monitor education and practice standards and to ensure that those wishing to practise physical therapy in Poland meet the standard.

WCPT member organisations vote upon international policy at WCPT General Meetings. Member organisations, such as KIF, have a responsibility to support, promote and advance the role of physical therapists ensuring that standards are in place to deliver quality service to the public. WCPT member organisations accept WCPT policies and work to achieve the standards of practice and education as described in the WCPT's policies and guidelines.

KIF has shown great leadership during this crisis by developing a range of strategies to ensure that physiotherapists can continue to work safely and effectively to support the health system during this time.

Physiotherapy, as a health profession, has a critical role to play in maintaining the health and wellbeing of the Polish community. However with most traditional physiotherapy care suspended during the period of social distancing, patients will likely experience a deterioration of other conditions unrelated to the coronavirus.

Individuals, unable to leave their homes for several weeks, will become even more sedentary, lose mobility and function, and require physiotherapy services when restrictions are lifted.

However there is an opportunity to now to prevent this community wide functional decline.

I understand that you are currently discussing with KIF the issue of tele-rehabilitation. In recent days we have seen health systems in the USA, Australia and the UK quickly make provision for this type of physiotherapy service:

Australia

<https://www.health.gov.au/ministers/the-hon-greg-hunt-mp/media/covid-19-whole-of-population-telehealth-for-patients-general-practice-primary-care-and-other-medical-services>

USA

<http://www.apta.org/PTinMotion/News/2020/03/27/UHCTelehealth/>


UK

<https://www.csp.org.uk/news/coronavirus/remote-service-delivery-options>

Now and in the coming month's tele-rehabilitation will be an important tool in allowing physiotherapists to rise to the challenge of this unprecedented situation and prevent functional decline.

Therefore to prevent a public health emergency in the months ahead I urge your government to allow this type of physiotherapy service to be provided now.

Yours sincerely



Jonathon Kruger
Chief Executive Officer

Cc: Krajowa Izba Fizjoterapeutów (KIF) maciej.krawczyk@kif.info.pl