

**MEDIA RELEASE**  
**For immediate release**

**Physiotherapists celebrate achievements and rich history of service  
to Canadians on World Physical Therapy Day – September 8**

Toronto, September 8 – Today is World Physical Therapy Day, a day the World Confederation for Physical Therapy has set aside to recognize the vital work that physiotherapists do for their patients and their community. World Physical Therapy Day also marks the unity and solidarity of the physiotherapy community from 101 countries around the world including Canada, a country where the profession of physiotherapy has made tremendous strides over the last century.

Physiotherapy is the 5<sup>th</sup> largest regulated health profession in Canada after nursing, medicine, pharmacy, and dentistry. Canada's 20,000 physiotherapists practice in a wide variety of clinical and academic settings including hospitals, long term care facilities, universities, and private clinics. They have extensive expertise in treating a broad range of conditions, from assessing and treating minor strains and sprains, to providing pre- and post-operative care, as well as managing many chronic conditions. Physiotherapists are also involved in research on some of the most serious diseases affecting the global population.

Canadian physiotherapists are among the best educated and qualified health practitioners in the world. They are university-educated health professionals who receive extensive academic and clinical training in the health sciences. On the world stage, Canadian physiotherapists are renowned for their advanced clinical expertise as well as their leadership in academic and scientific pursuits.

On this day, physiotherapists will be celebrating these achievements and their long history of service to the Canadian public. The profession's roots go back to the First World War when boatloads of our wounded service men in need of rehabilitation arrived back home in Canada. Physiotherapy was essential to restore those men to their pre-war health and help them re-enter civilian life. Many of them were sent to the University of Toronto where the Military School of Orthopaedic Surgery and Physiotherapy was located, and where, in 1929, the first physical therapy degree in North America was offered.

In the early years, the practice attracted many women who might otherwise have pursued nursing. Their growing numbers were needed in the 1930s and 1940s to help deal with the effects of the polio epidemics sweeping Canada, and to rehabilitate the casualties of the Second World War.

Over time, physiotherapy evolved to include treatment of the civilian population. Demand for physiotherapists has continued to grow in the last 50 years as the benefits of early intervention with physiotherapy for various disabilities, sports injuries, traumas, and chronic conditions has been recognized.

In the future, as the baby boomer population ages, access to physiotherapy services will become even more essential. An anticipated increase in the incidence of diseases like arthritis will make physiotherapists some of the most sought after primary health care professionals in Canada.

On World Physical Therapy Day the Canadian Physiotherapy Association salutes physiotherapists across the country for their unwavering commitment to the health care of Canadians and their contribution to their profession world wide.

**Media contacts:**

charysse robinson, Ontario Physiotherapy Association Media and Events Coordinator, 416 322 6866 (x225), [crobinson@opa.on.ca](mailto:crobinson@opa.on.ca)

Virginia Bawlf, National Media Relations Liaison, 416-932-1888 (x222), 647-379-4145 (cell), [vbawlf@physiotherapy.ca](mailto:vbawlf@physiotherapy.ca).