



Showcasing the value of physical therapy through a University-Community-Saskatchewan Physiotherapy Association partnership

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Several years ago, the Saskatchewan Physiotherapy Association (SPA) highlighted a strong need to provide enhanced evidence, information, and public advocacy material for use by the general public. The SPA wanted to strengthen messaging around the role of what physical therapy can do to support the general population in maintaining and optimizing health. At the same time, the SPA wanted to also strengthen relationships with physical therapy students with the idea that by actively engaging them during their program at the University of Saskatchewan (U of S), they would be more likely to remain as active SPA members.

We decided to embark on a partnership connecting the SPA with Master of Physical Therapy (MPT) students at the U of S, and with diverse community organizations and stakeholder groups. We were keen to hear from community organizations directly about what types of things would support them and their members in better understanding what physical therapy can provide them in their health journey. We

could then respond to these community voices and direction by creating value of physical therapy documents that fit with how community organizations could use them, and what types of information would be helpful to their members and user groups. This is where the first year MPT students, engaged in a Professional Practice course, came in. These students were tasked with an assignment requiring them to actively engage and dialogue with diverse community organizations, capturing their priorities, and linking these with aspects of physical therapy practice that would be beneficial to their organization. Students used this information to create 'Value of Physical Therapy' promotional documents, unique to each community organization to whom they were assigned. MPT students ensured that the community organizations were involved as much as they could be throughout the creation phase of the assignment. Upon completion of the final versions of the Value of Physical Therapy promotional documents, the MPT students host a knowledge translation event where

they invite community organizations, the SPA, and the MPT program faculty and staff to view the final documents created by the entire class. The projects include patient content to help educate individuals about specific conditions, how physical therapy can support them, and where to find a physical therapist who treats these conditions in their community. SPA posts this information and the content developed by the students to the local SPA webpage to support others living with the condition to access this information.

To date, there have been three first year MPT Professional Practice classes that have engaged in this project. We have worked with approximately 18 diverse community organizations and independent stakeholders, including physical therapy clinicians working in unique areas (such as pelvic floor health and vestibular rehabilitation). Below are exemplars from this collaborative project and a summary of these can be found online here. All partnerships described below were between these highlighted community partners, the SPA, and first year MPT students at the U of S.

Right: Promoting the value of physical therapy in primary health care settings.

Below: Promoting Health through Cycling: A partnership with 'Saskatoon Cycles'.



No Pain. All Gain.

See a
Physical Therapist
at SWITCH



SWITCH
STUDENT WELLNESS INITIATIVE
TOWARD COMMUNITY HEALTH



Saskatchewan
Physiotherapy
Association



Saskatoon
Community
Clinic



GET YOUR DUCKS IN A ROW

Getting 60 minutes of daily activity per day reduces the chance of getting type 2 diabetes

- Faith and Fitness, 2017






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Saskatchewan
Physiotherapy
Association

1. The Low Down on Your Low Back. Back pain is common among farmers. We partnered with the Agriculture Health and Safety Network (AHSN) to provide farmers with an information sheet on the topic of low back pain in farmers. The article was printed in an AHSN newsletter and distributed to 27,000 farm families across Saskatchewan.

2. Aging Gracefully with 'The Meri Misfits'. The Meri Misfits are a Saskatoon performance group of 'edutainers' (education entertainers) who we teamed up with to create a series of short education videos about 'aging gracefully' and the role of physical therapy and aging. The 'Meri Misfits' perform these physio-themed skits and songs to advocate for aging well in the community and distribute the associated tri-fold pamphlets to their audiences. Local physical therapy clinics also distribute the pamphlet.

3. Promoting Health through Cycling: A partnership with 'Saskatoon Cycles'. Saskatoon Cycles is a local community organization that advocates for a city in which cycling is a viable, year-round mode of transportation that is safe and convenient for all ages. We partnered with Saskatoon Cycles to create health promotion and cycling banners and bookmarks. The banners were printed and currently displayed on the 'bike valet' fencing for at least 8 different festivals in the community of Saskatoon. The bookmarks have been distributed to the Saskatoon Public School Division to print and give to young students to promote active transportation to school.

4. Shoulder Deep in Beef: What physical therapy can do for bovine veterinarians. This partnership was with the ErgoVet Research Team (with the Canadian Centre for Health and Safety in Agriculture (CCHSA)). We created an informative pamphlet on the benefits of physical therapy for those working bovine veterinary medicine. This information sheet has been printed in the newsletter for Western Canadian Association of Bovine Practitioners (WCABP) (page 11) and distributed across Western Canada.



Pelvic Floor Health Social Media Campaign

5. Pelvic Floor Health Social Media Campaign:

#All4PelvicFloor. We engaged directly with several pelvic floor physical therapists in the community to inform the development of this pelvic floor health social media campaign. The goal of this campaign is to raise awareness of the importance of pelvic floor health and to address the stigma associated with pelvic floor health and incontinence. These posters were shared on SPA's Facebook, Twitter and Instagram during National Physiotherapy Month in May 2018.

6. Promoting the value of physical therapy in primary health care settings. We partnered with the Student Wellness Initiative Towards Community Health (SWITCH), a student run non-profit wellness clinic providing free medical and social services and programming for individuals living in the core neighborhood of Saskatoon. This poster initiative helps support awareness building of what physical therapy can provide to individuals and supports the development of physical therapy roles in primary health care. A series of posters were created, printed and on display at SWITCH to promote the clinic and accessing physiotherapy services. The SWITCH clinic has utilized these posters in their fund-raising campaigns.

The collaborations we have engaged in throughout the past several years, to promote the value of physical therapy to the public and key stakeholders, have been rich and rewarding on many levels. Actively engaging first year MPT students in this project allowed them opportunities to practice essential physical therapy competency skills including communication, leadership, collaboration, and professionalism. Furthermore, engaging students in SPA activities early in their training program supported them to better understand the role of our professional association and to 'give back' to the profession in a meaningful way. Community organizations benefited from this project as they could guide and direct the design of knowledge translation products aligned with their strategic initiatives and were provided with the final products to support their activities and priorities.

Lastly, the impact at the level of SPA has been tremendous as these final products are now posted on the SPA website available to the general population and members, and are aligned with our strategic priority of promoting the value of physical therapy to the public.

For more information and to view additional materials, visit SPA's website at: <http://saskphysio.org/physiotherapy/student-collaboration-initiative>. 📄



About Sarah Oosman

Sarah is an Assistant Professor in the School of Rehabilitation Science and a Researcher with the Saskatchewan Population Health and Evaluation Research Unit (SPHERU) at the University of Saskatchewan. She has been a physical therapist since 1998 with clinical experience in both private and public sectors nationally and internationally. Her research interests include: community-engaged Participatory Action Research in partnership with Métis and First Nations Indigenous communities, implementation and evaluation of culture-based health promoting interventions, and developing cultural humility and cultural safety among health care professionals and our health system. Sarah is a member of the Indigenous Health Subcommittee in the Global Health Division of CPA.



About Garnette Weber

Garnette graduated from the University of Saskatchewan with great distinction in 1996. She worked as a physiotherapist for 15 years in both private practice and public practice in the areas of neuro and orthopaedic rehab, respiratory services, and both orthopaedic inpatient and outpatient settings. Garnette has provided physiotherapy consulting for the past 10 years with key clients including the Saskatchewan Physiotherapy Association (SPA), Private Practice Division of SPA and the Canadian Physiotherapy Association. Garnette has a passion for the advancement of the profession as well as a strong exposure to technology and research through her role as a senior manager of itracks, a market research company focused on qualitative research technology.



About Brenna Bath

Brenna is an Associate Professor in the School of Rehabilitation Science and an associate member of the Canadian Centre for Health and Safety in Agriculture and Community Health and Epidemiology at the University of Saskatchewan. She has been a physiotherapist since 1998 with clinical experience in public and private sector interdisciplinary outpatient orthopedic settings. Her research interests include: prevention and management of musculoskeletal conditions; investigation of health care access disparities among vulnerable populations; and the use of interprofessional teams and technology to overcome barriers to accessing physiotherapy services in rural and remote communities.

Resources

Newsletter - Western Canadian Association of Bovine Practitioners (WCABP) <https://www.wcabp.com/images/newsletters/NL2018June.pdf>

Resource sheets - Saskatchewan Student Collaboration Initiative <http://saskphysio.org/physiotherapy/student-collaboration-initiative>