

THE 10 MISTAKES THAT AGED CARE FACILITIES MUST AVOID WHEN ENGAGING A PHYSIOTHERAPY SERVICE PROVIDER

The Aged care industry has grown rapidly, and aged care facilities face a daily balancing act between meeting funding requirements, meeting accreditation standards and of course, providing excellent care to their residents.



With so many 'boxes to tick', it would be easy for a facility to feel that all Physiotherapy service providers were the same. The reality, however, is quite different.



Although many Physiotherapy service providers can carry out required care and complete adequate paperwork, engaging the wrong service can leave you at risk, with funding left on the table, and with poorer outcomes for your residents.

'The 10 Mistakes that Aged Care Facilities Must Avoid When Engaging a Physiotherapy Service Provider' is designed to help you to navigate this important decision making process, and guide you to make the best choice for your facility.

MISTAKE #1: ACFI Claiming Opportunities are Missed

The pain management program currently makes up a large component of funding claims for Physiotherapy services, but did you know that there are other claiming opportunities that you could be missing out on? A quality Physiotherapist will always be proactively reviewing your funding situation, and ensuring you are not missing out on funding that you may qualify for.



MISTAKE #2: Lack of Continuity of Physiotherapy Care



Some providers may guarantee that their Physio will attend your facility at nominated times, but will it be the same consistent person, or a new face every week? Having a frequently changing Physio population through your facility can put your claiming at risk, due to decreased familiarity with your residents, their care levels and their needs.

MISTAKE #3: Being Reactive to Falls, Rather Than Proactive

All Physiotherapists can fill out a form following a resident fall, but a great therapist will take on accountability and preventative steps, and actually help your facility to reduce falls. That's a big 'win win' for you and for your residents.

MISTAKE #4: Missing Opportunities to Boost Occupancy

Laws and funding models may come and go, but a high quality, innovative aged care facility will always be successful. Is your Physiotherapy service helping your facility to embrace innovation and generate continuous improvement? If this is important to you, it needs to be important to your Physio too.

MISTAKE #5: Being Put At Risk Through Poor Manual Handling

Manual handling issues in aged care facilities are the single highest cause of expensive workcover claims. Many Physios providing manual handling training to your staff are not adequately trained themselves. Manual handling is a highly specialized area of Physiotherapy, where additional training is required. With the health and safety of your staff at risk, can you afford to have a poorly trained Physio educating your staff?



MISTAKE #6: Recommendations Not Integrated Into Daily Care

Treatment recommendations – in the aged care Physio industry they are a dime a dozen, but how many actually get implemented? Ensure you engage a Physiotherapy service that actually integrates their interventions into daily care so that the residents are getting the intensity of therapy they need to make improvements.

MISTAKE #7: Missing Out On Best Practice Care



Best practice can be defined as the 'professional procedures that are accepted or prescribed as being correct or most effective'. If your facility has had the same Physiotherapy service provider for a long time, have you seen their work evolve and develop over time? If not, ask them to list the ways in which they are ensuring that they are providing you with best practice care.

MISTAKE #8: Missing Out On Additional Value

Some Physiotherapy services only provide the base required activity, while the really great ones include extras that you need, like ACFI consulting, Dementia Care Mapping, and Carer training. Do your Physios have extra training in reportable behaviours, thereby reducing your risk in this category?

MISTAKE #9: Lack of Tangible Results For Residents

A service is only as effective as it's systems. Check that your Physio service uses proven systems that generate real, tangible results for your residents. In addition, ensure these results are visible to you. Are you able to view relevant statistics in real time? Can you easily see where changes in resident status have affected your funding?

MISTAKE #10: Engaging Specialists Rather Than Generalists

A Physiotherapy degree alone does not create a therapist who is a specialist in the field of gerontology. Expert knowledge is gleaned from years of experience, plus attending further education coursework, conferences and seminars. If your Physio service provider is not creating a team of gerontology specialists, you may find yourself with therapists that do not have the knowledge or skills to deal with complex conditions such as dementia. They are therefore in a poor position to help your facility to control the associated risks.



About the Author - Sheryl Aldcroft



Sheryl is an accomplished physiotherapist with 10 years of clinical experience across acute and community settings. She has worked collaboratively as a part of executive management teams to achieve high quality service standards, and has been instrumental in allied health service development through her senior management roles.

Sheryl is now the Managing Director - Clinical Services of Agestrong Physio, which specialises in Physiotherapy Service Provision and Clinical Risk Management for older individuals residing in residential care, Sheryl has a passion for raising the profile of physiotherapy within the aged care industry and striving to achieving exceptional care and quality of life outcomes.

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