

Press Release
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American Heart Association Prescribes Physical Therapy First

DALLAS__The American Heart Association recommends doctors change their approach to prescribing pain relievers for patients with or at risk for heart disease. In a scientific statement published Feb. 27, 2007 in ***Circulation: Journal of the American Heart Association***, the heart specialists instead prescribe physical therapy first.

“We believe that some physicians have been prescribing the new COX-2 inhibitors as the first line of treatment. We are turning that around and saying that, for chronic pain in patients with known heart disease or who are at risk for heart disease, these drugs should be the last line of treatment,” said Elliott M. Antman, M.D., FAHA, lead author of the American Heart Association scientific statement and professor of medicine at Harvard Medical School and Brigham and Women’s Hospital.

“We advise physicians to start with non-pharmacologic treatments such as physical therapy and exercise, weight loss to reduce stress on joints, and heat or cold therapy. If the non-pharmacologic approach does not provide enough pain relief or control of symptoms, we recommend a stepped-care approach when it comes to prescribing drugs.”

“This recommendation comes as no surprise to physical therapists,” said Dr. Timothy Flynn from Regis University, Denver, and President of the American Academy of Orthopedic Manual Physical Therapists (AAOMPT). “Research has repeatedly shown the value of early physical therapy for patients with musculoskeletal conditions. We are glad to see that the

AHA's recommendations of physical therapy as a safe and effective alternative to drugs are consistent with these findings. It only makes sense to see your physical therapist before trying drugs and surgery."

To read the AHAs scientific statement online, go to:

<http://www.americanheart.org/presenter.jhtml?identifier=3045689>. For more on the benefits of physical therapy, contact your nearest physical therapist or visit the American Academy of Manual Physical Therapists website at: <http://www.aaompt.org>.