

Importance of Future Care Costs in Physical Therapy Expert Witness Testimony **Objective. Defensible. Convenient.**

As a licensed physical therapist, I am writing to outline the critical role that future care costs play in personal injury litigation, particularly from the perspective of a physical therapy expert witness. These projections are often a central component in determining the full extent of damages and can significantly influence the outcome of the case.

What Future Care Costs Cover

Future care costs refer to the anticipated medical and rehabilitative expenses an injured individual is expected to incur over the course of their lifetime as a direct result of the injury.

From a physical therapy standpoint, this may include:

- Ongoing physical therapy services (maintenance or restorative care)
- Periodic re-evaluations and functional assessments
- Assistive devices (e.g., braces, mobility aids) and their replacement
- Home exercise programs and supervision
- Pain management interventions related to functional impairment
- Home or vehicle modifications when mobility is affected
- Coordination with other healthcare providers for multidisciplinary care

These costs are particularly relevant in cases involving chronic conditions, permanent impairments, or injuries requiring long-term management rather than full recovery.

How Future Care Costs Are Developed

Future care cost projections are typically derived through a comprehensive, evidence-based process that may include:

- Detailed review of medical records and therapy notes
- Clinical evaluation of the patient's current functional status and prognosis
- Consideration of physician recommended and treatment plans
- Application of standardized guidelines and accepted practices within rehabilitation services
- Collaboration with life care planners and economists, when appropriate

The physical therapy expert contributes by determining the frequency, duration, and type of therapy services required in the future, based on clinical expertise and objective findings. These recommendations are then translated into cost projections- using regional fee data and adjusted for factors such as inflation and life expectancy.

Impact on Case Outcomes

Future care costs can substantially affect the valuation of a claim. In many cases, they represent a significant portion of economic damages, especially when long-term or life long care is required. Clear, well-supported projections can:

- Strengthen the credibility of the damages claim
- Assist the trier of fact in understanding the long-term implication of the injury.
- Provide a concrete basis for settlement negotiations or jury awards

Conversely, inadequately supported or speculative projections may be challenged and discounted, potentially reducing the overall recovery.

Conclusion

Accurate and defensible future care cost assessments are essential to ensuring that the injured individuals are appropriately compensated for the ongoing impact of their injuries. The role of the physical therapy expert is to provide objective, clinically grounded opinions that help quantify these needs in a clear and reliable manner.

Please feel free to contact me if further clarification or expert consultation is needed regarding future care planning or rehabilitative cost projections.

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