# Get PT First

*A value based approach to modernizing healthcare in Colorado.*

GET PT 1ST

APTA | COLORADO
American Physical Therapy Association
2013 Innovative Component Award

# Presenters & Contributors

- *Dean Hasse, PT: Private practice owner with multiple locations in Denver Metro area*
- *Cameron MacDonald, PT: President of Colorado Physical Therapy Association, Faculty at Regis University*
- *Tim Flynn, PT, PhD: Private practice owner with multiple locations in Ft. Collins; Well-published researcher in the area of low back pain*
- *Ellen Caruso: Director Government Affairs Colorado chapter APTA, lobbyist*
- *CIVHC – Eddy Costa, helping us to identify Value Driven Outcomes*

*Back…….*

ground

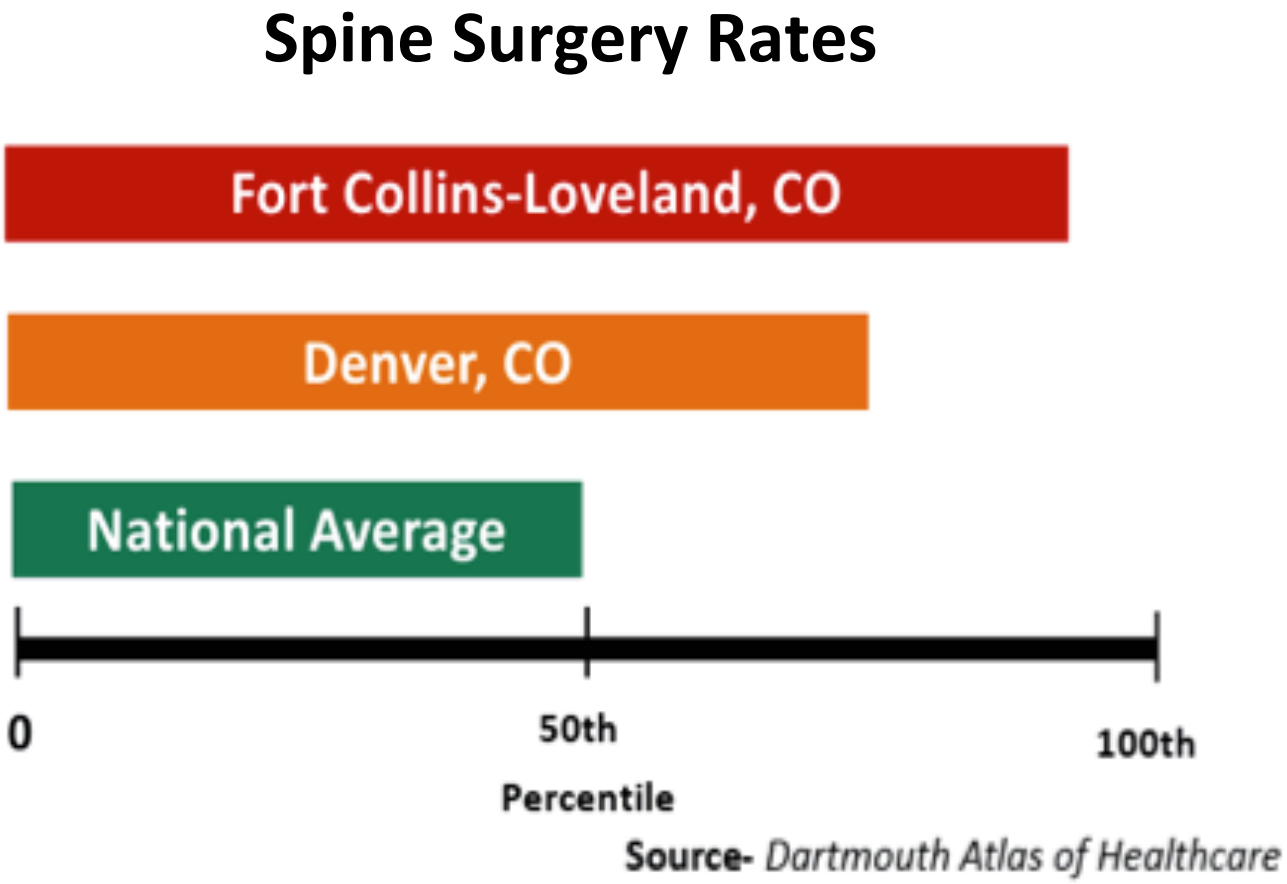
**Not VDO**

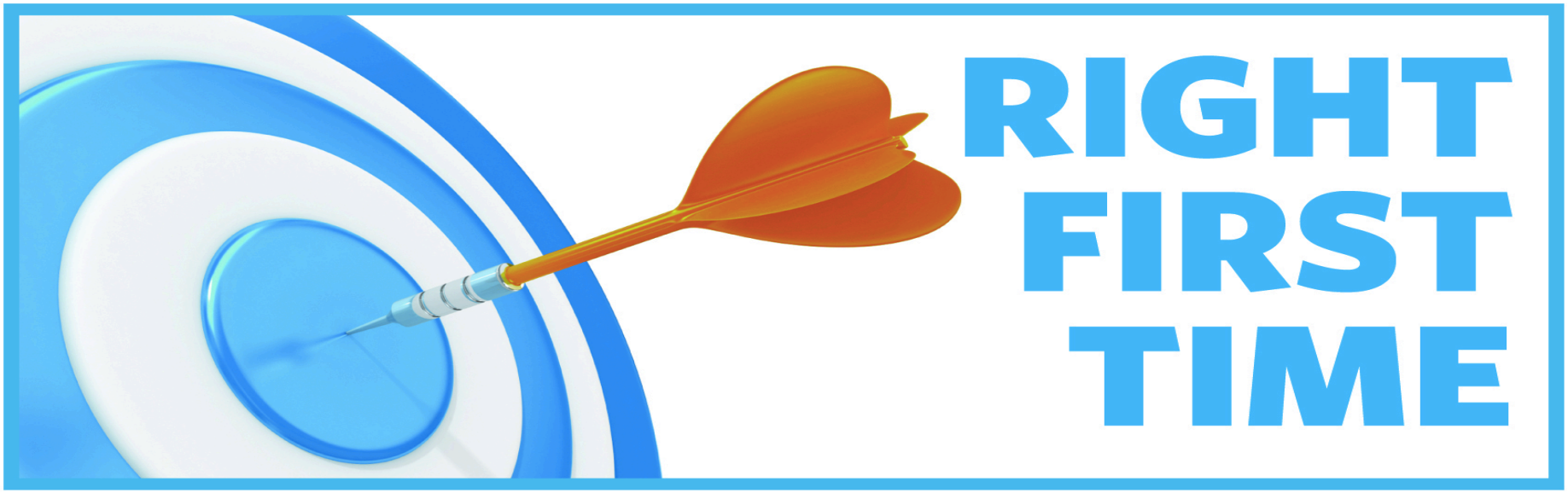
- Low back pain (LBP) is among the most common reasons to visit a physician and up to 25% of Americans report an incidence of back pain within the previous three months.
- Combined direct &indirect costs for LBP are between $85 billion and $238 billion.
- Expenditures for back pain are rising more quickly than overall health expenditures.

CONSISTENTLY INCONSISTENT

*Data for all Dartmouth Atlas regional data reflect the experience of patients living in the region, regardless of where the care was actually delivered.*

*Colorado is an outlier – not to the positive.*






***Initial management decisions following a new episode of low back pain (LBP) have profound implications for health care utilization and costs.***

# EVIDENCE SUPPORTS THAT EARLY ACCESS TO PHYSICAL THERAPY LOWERS HEALTHCARE COSTS

# Primary Care Referral of Patients With Low Back Pain to Physical Therapy

*Impact on Future Health Care Utilization and Costs*

Julie M. Fritz, PT, PhD, ATC,* John D. Childs, PT, PhD,† Robert S. Wainner, PT, PhD,‡ and Timothy W. Flynn, PT, PhD§

Spine

**SETTING**

Data extracted from Mercer Health Online® a database of members of employee-sponsored health plans.

**PATIENTS**

**32,070** patients with a new primary care consultation for LBP from November 1, 2007 - January 31, 2009.

SPINE Volume 37, Number 25, pp 2114–2121
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# RESULTS

- Physical therapy was underutilized, **only 7%** of patients received PT within 90 days.

- Early PT (within 14 days of primary care) occurred with 53% of physical therapy utilizers, and was associated with **decreased risk** of advanced imaging, additional physician visits, lumbar surgery, lumbar injections, and opioid use as compared with delayed physical therapy.

- Total medical costs for LBP **were $2736.23 lower** for patients receiving early physical therapy.

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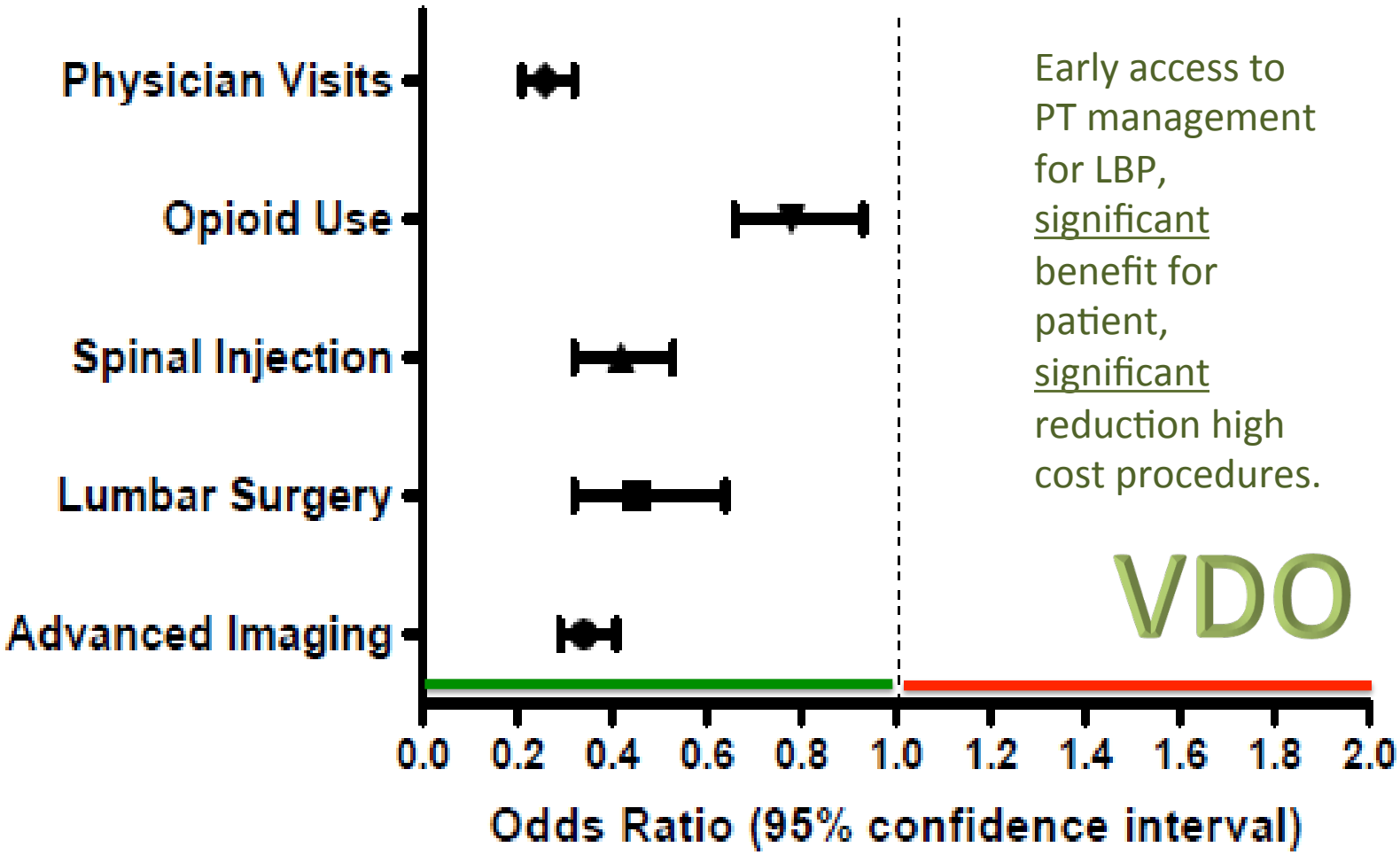
***Substantial reduction in high cost procedures was noted.***

## Likelihood of Utilization for Early vs. Delayed Physical Therapy




Early access to PT management for LBP, significant benefit for patient, significant reduction high cost procedures.

VDO

# Management Patterns in Acute Low Back Pain

*The Role of Physical Therapy*

Gellhorn et al. 2012; 37: 775 – 782

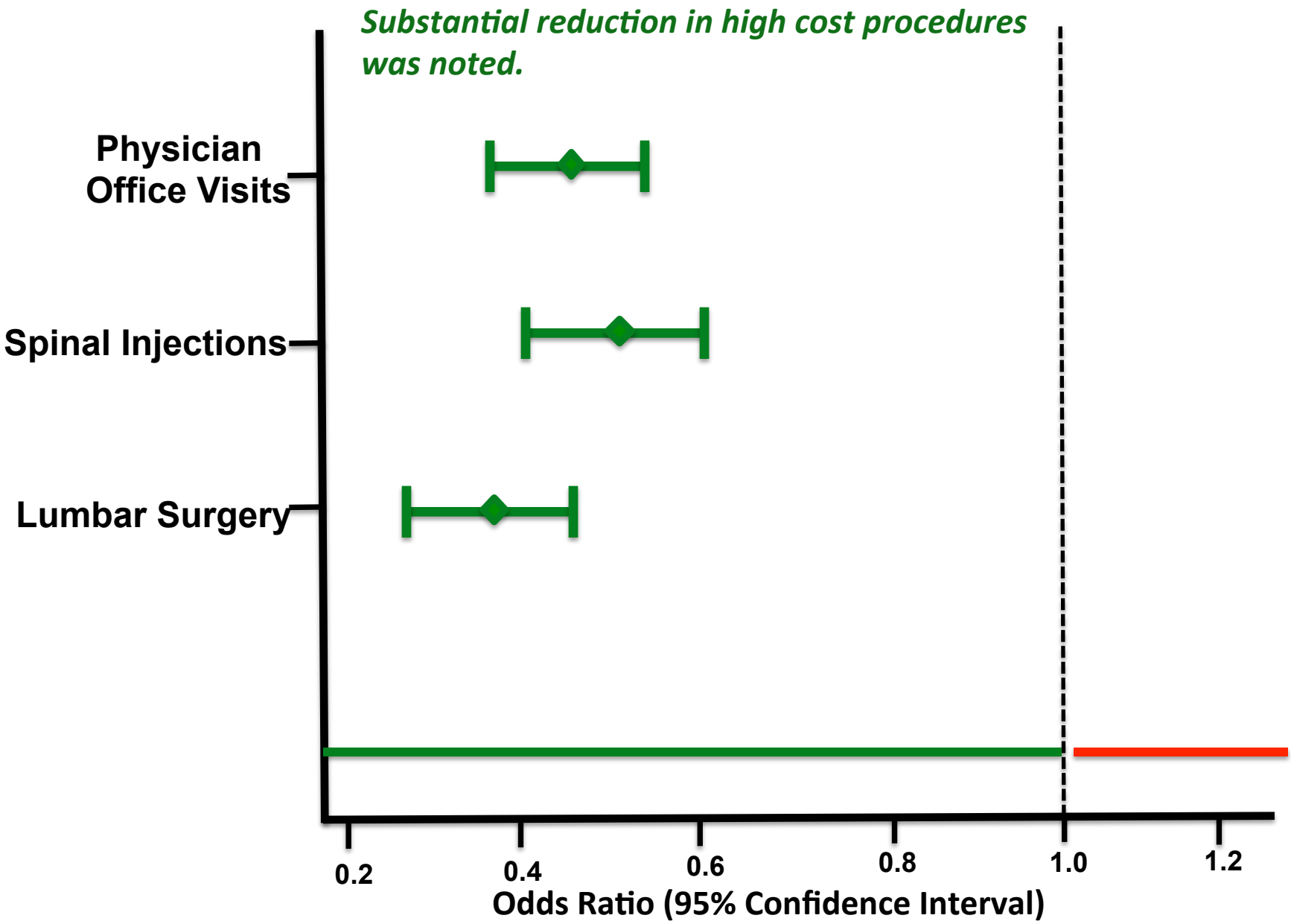
Spine

A national sample of the CMS and Medicaid Services physician outpatient billing claims was analyzed (n = 439,195).

***There was a lower risk of subsequent medical service usage among patients who received PT early after an episode of acute LBP relative to those who received PT at later times.***

GET PT 1ST

# Likelihood of Utilization for Early PT versus Delayed PT



# Implications of early and guideline adherent physical therapy for low back pain on utilization and costs.

BMC
Health Services Research

Childs et al. 2015, 15:150

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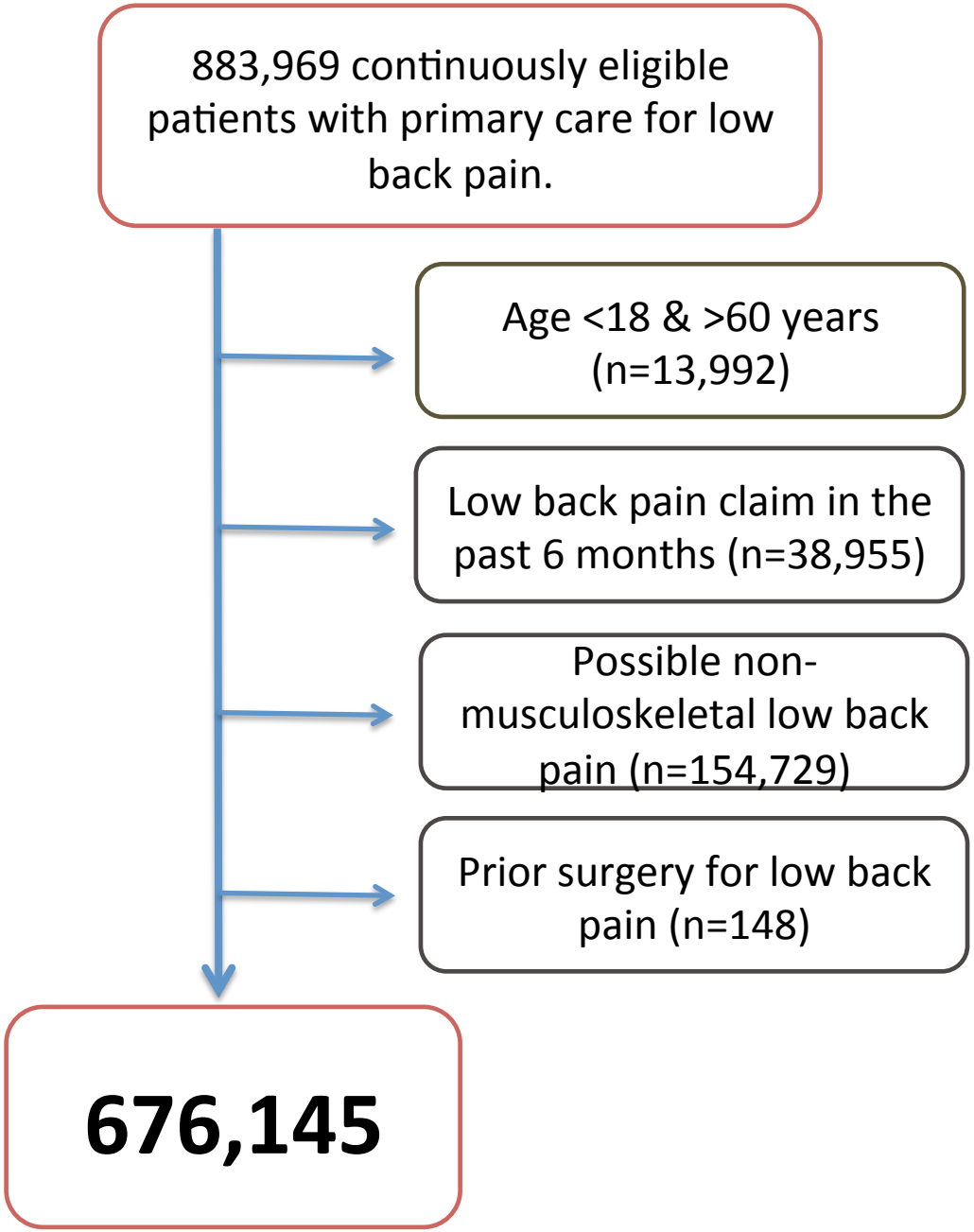


BMC Health Services Research

Childs et al. 2015, 15:150
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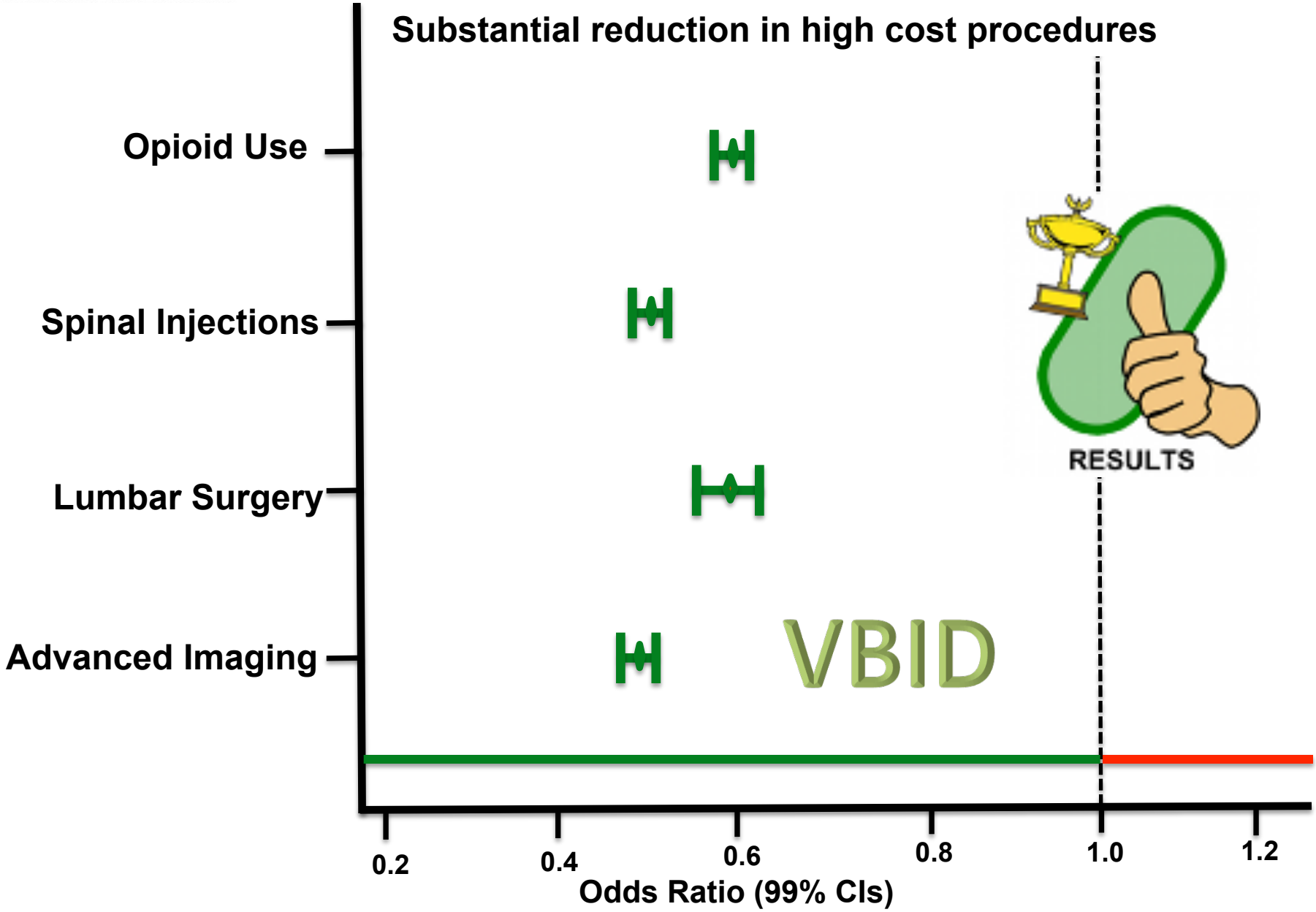
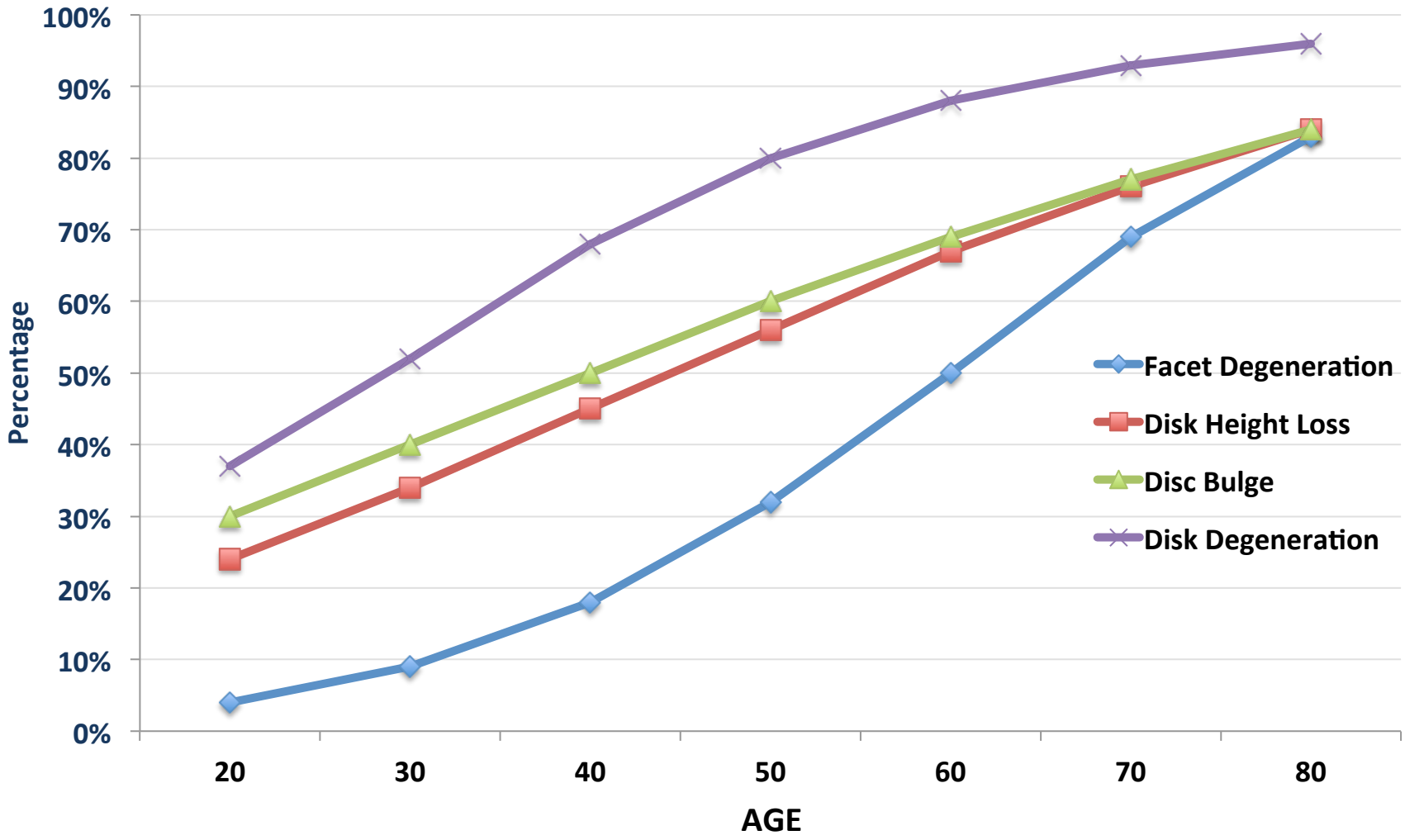
# Early PT versus Delayed PT



# MRI & CT Findings in Individuals Without Low Back Pain

## *Wrinkles on the inside are normal!*

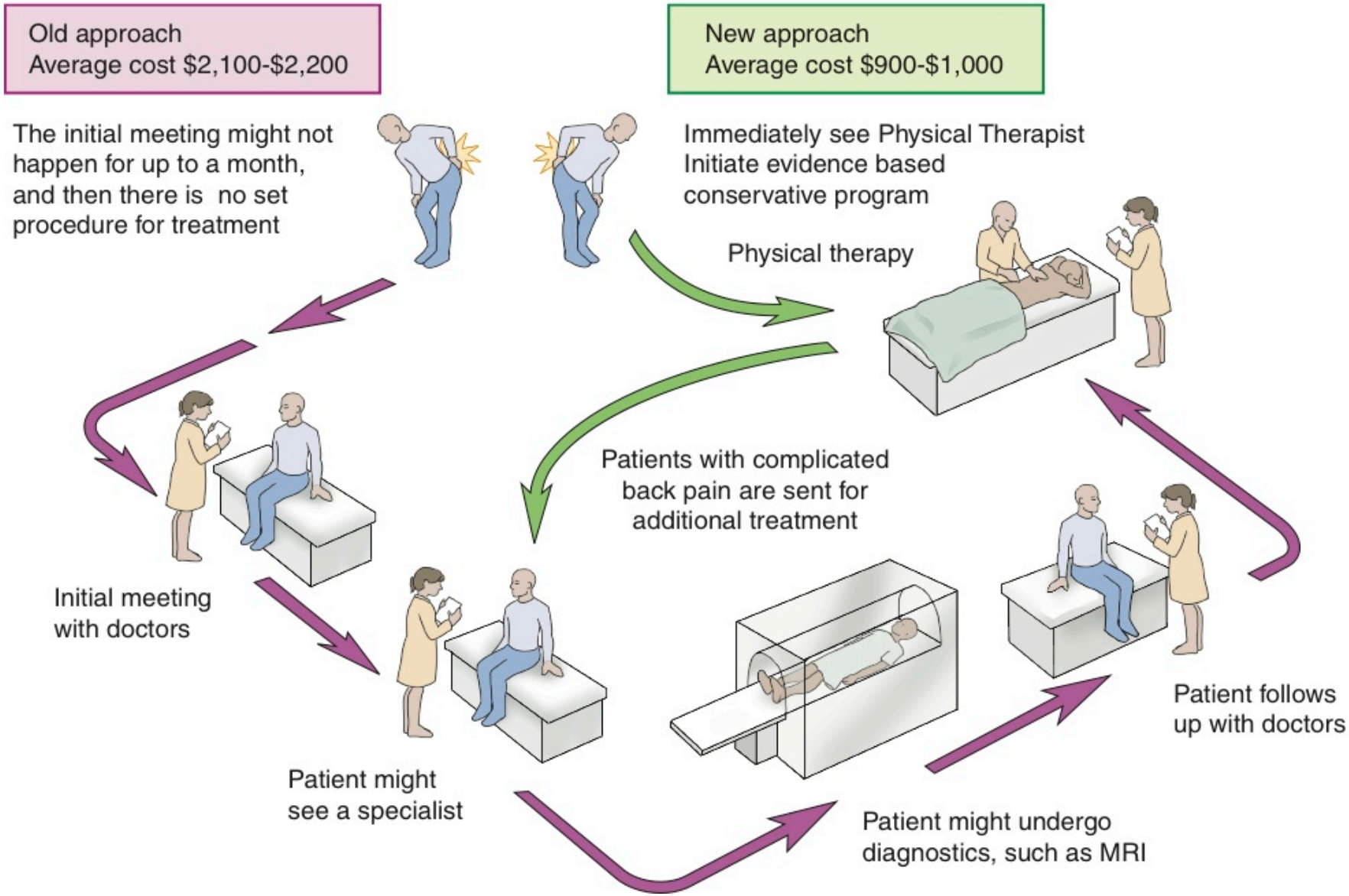



Brinjikji et al. *Systematic Literature Review of Imaging Features of Spinal Degeneration in Asymptomatic Populations.* Am J Neuroradiology, 2014.

# PT First is Better for LBP

Virginia Mason Example
Fuhrmans V. *A novel plan helps hospital wean itself off pricey tests. Wall Street Journal.* 2007.

## 94% reduction in MRI use



# **PT First** Goals – LBP example

- Provide a **pathway** for quality, cost-effective management of patients with low back pain
- Increase role of PT's as ancillary primary care providers in MSK health care, reduce specialist utilization to control costs – top of scope practice
- Incentivize the **right care**, for the **right person**, at the **right time**. (triple aim)
  - Patient education to seek PT first for LBP
  - Education to the PT from CO APTA chapter for optimal, evidence based treatment approaches including screening for biopsychosocial factors the predict poor outcomes and provide alternate pathway

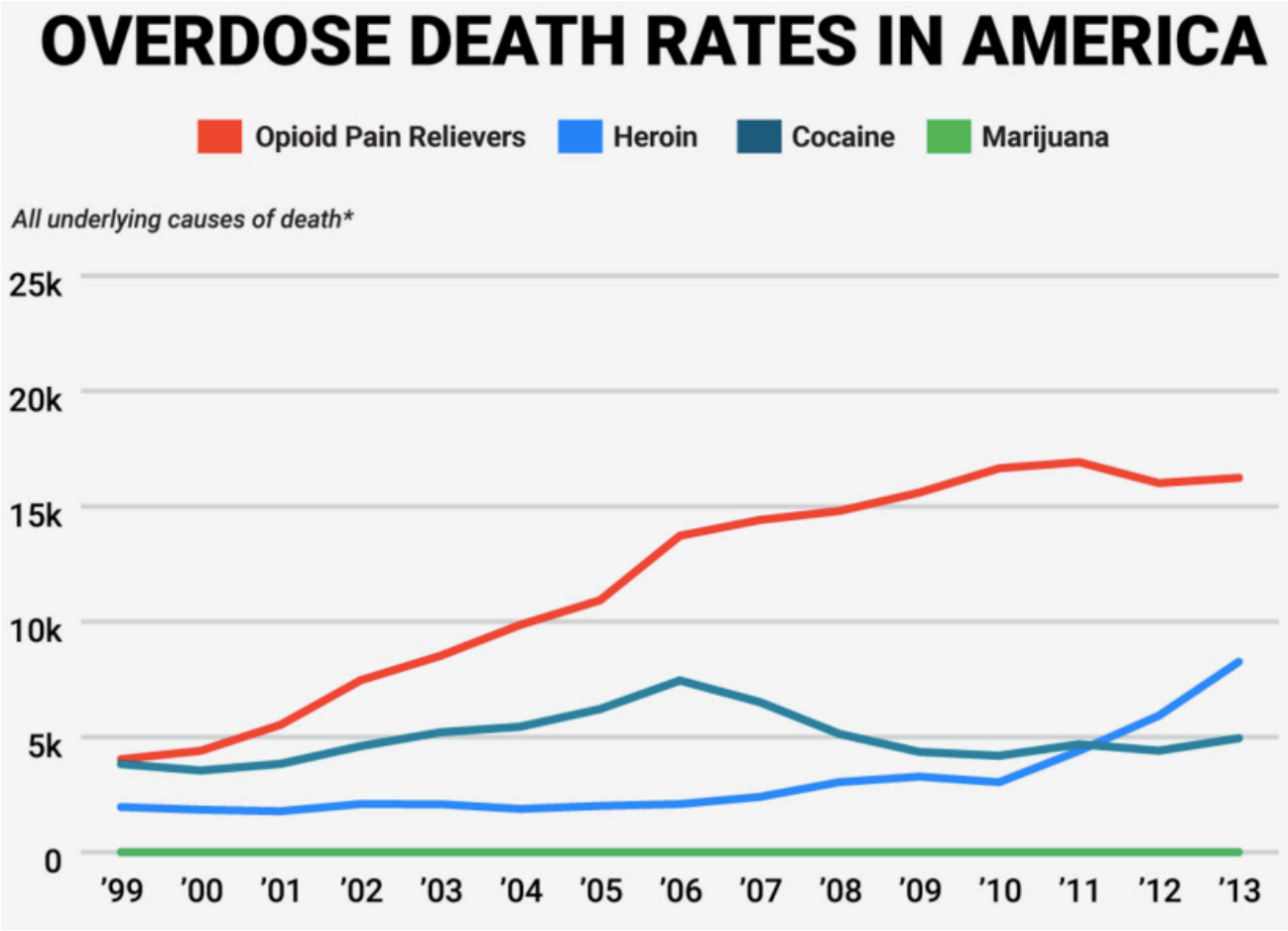
# US Military Model

***Bagram Airfield- Afghanistan***

- 75% of MSK patients referred to PT
- PTs as PCP compared to Family Practice
- PT- 3897 patients. FP 4779 patients.
- **Imaging rate PT 11% FP 82%**
- **Medication rate PT 24% FP 90%**
- Return to Duty Rate Higher in PT

Courtesy: I Gorman PT PhD

# Opioids are the most commonly prescribed drugs for low back pain!



# PT 1st → OPIOIDS LAST

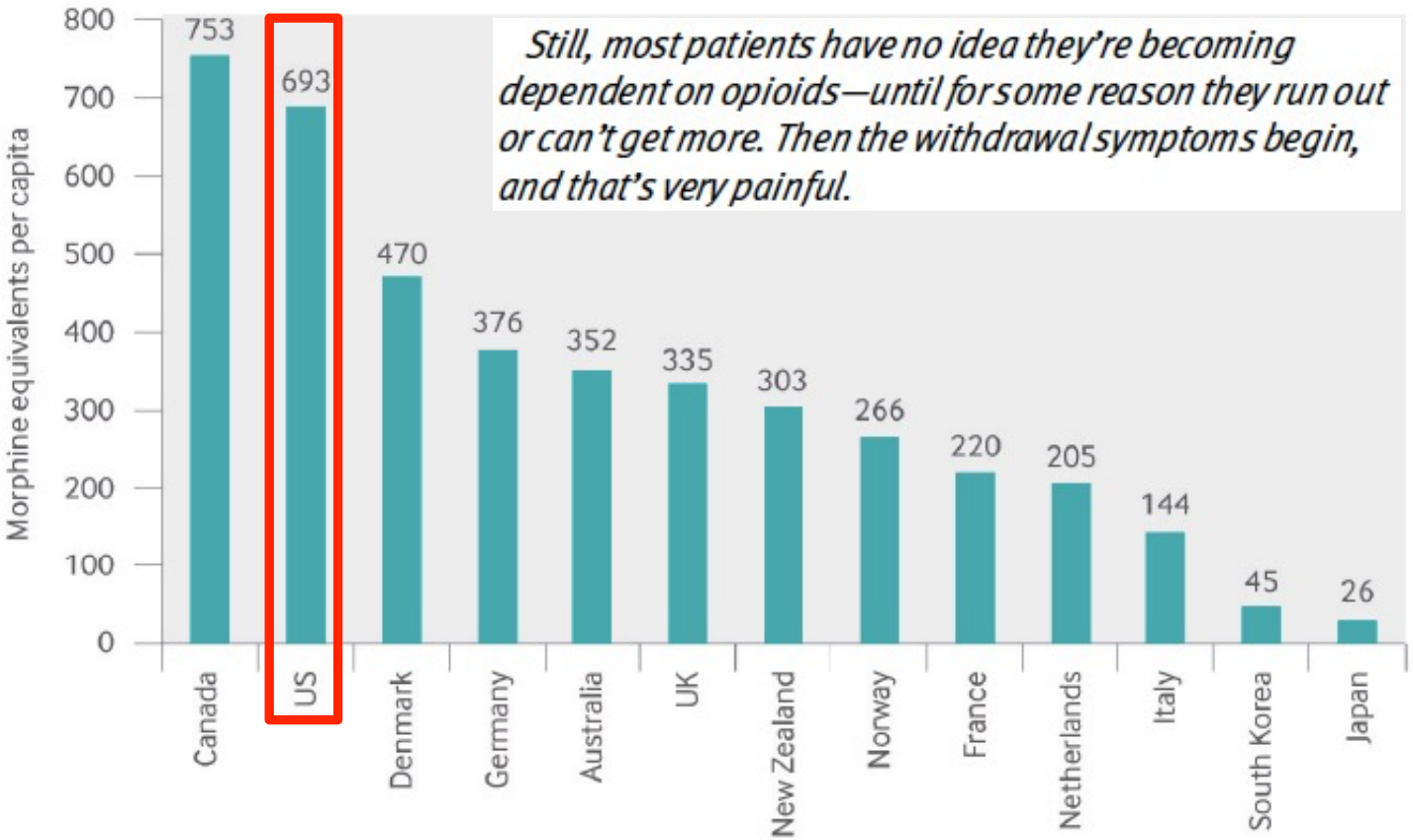
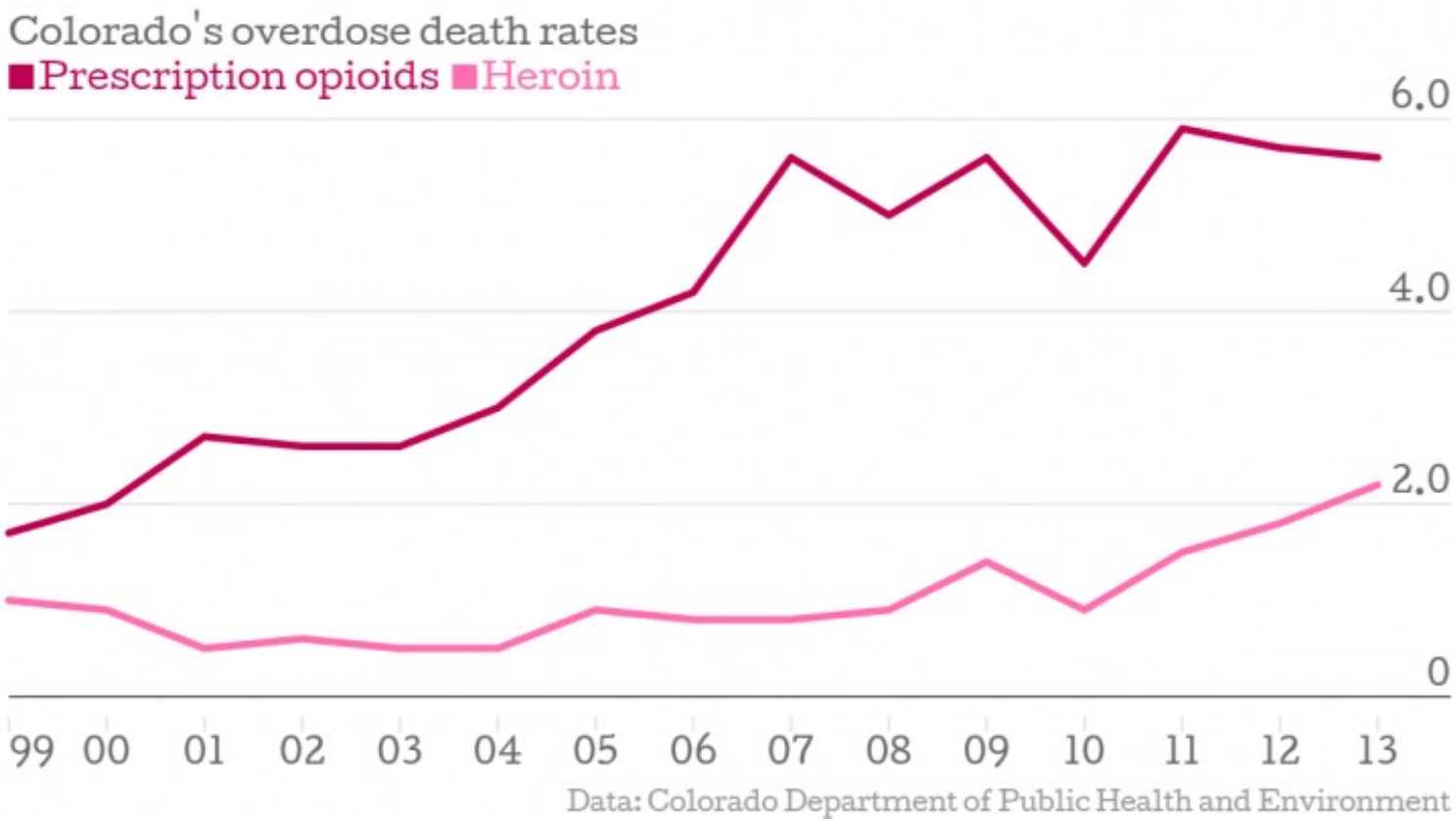



Fig 1 | International use of six powerful opioids—fentanyl, hydromorphone, methadone, morphine, oxycodone, and pethidine (meperidine)—during 2010 (www.painpolicy.wisc.edu)

# PT 1st → OPIOIDS LAST

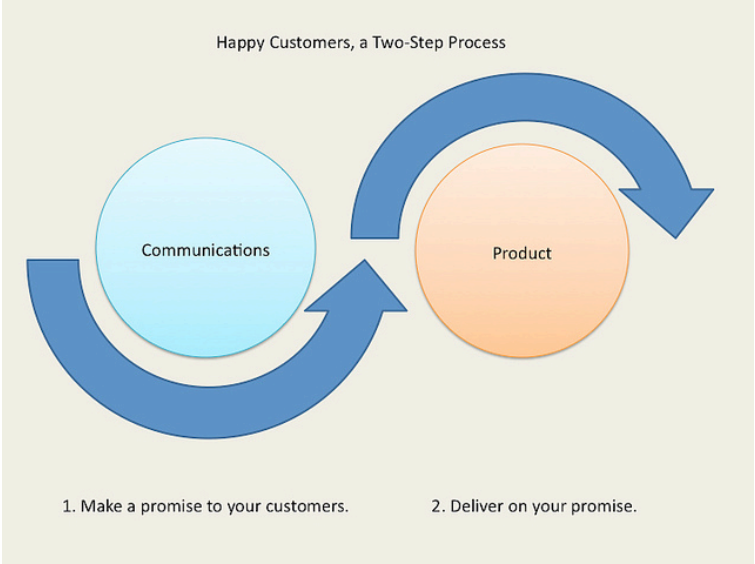
**Overdose Deaths per 100,000 Coloradoans**



# Care Pathways Matter

- **What the implications for Colorado could be?**
  - Reduction in utilization of high cost interventions
  - Patient outcomes improved
  - Consumer satisfaction improved

- **A new approach to MSK management**
  - Lower cost and better outcomes
  - Result is societal benefit to our state



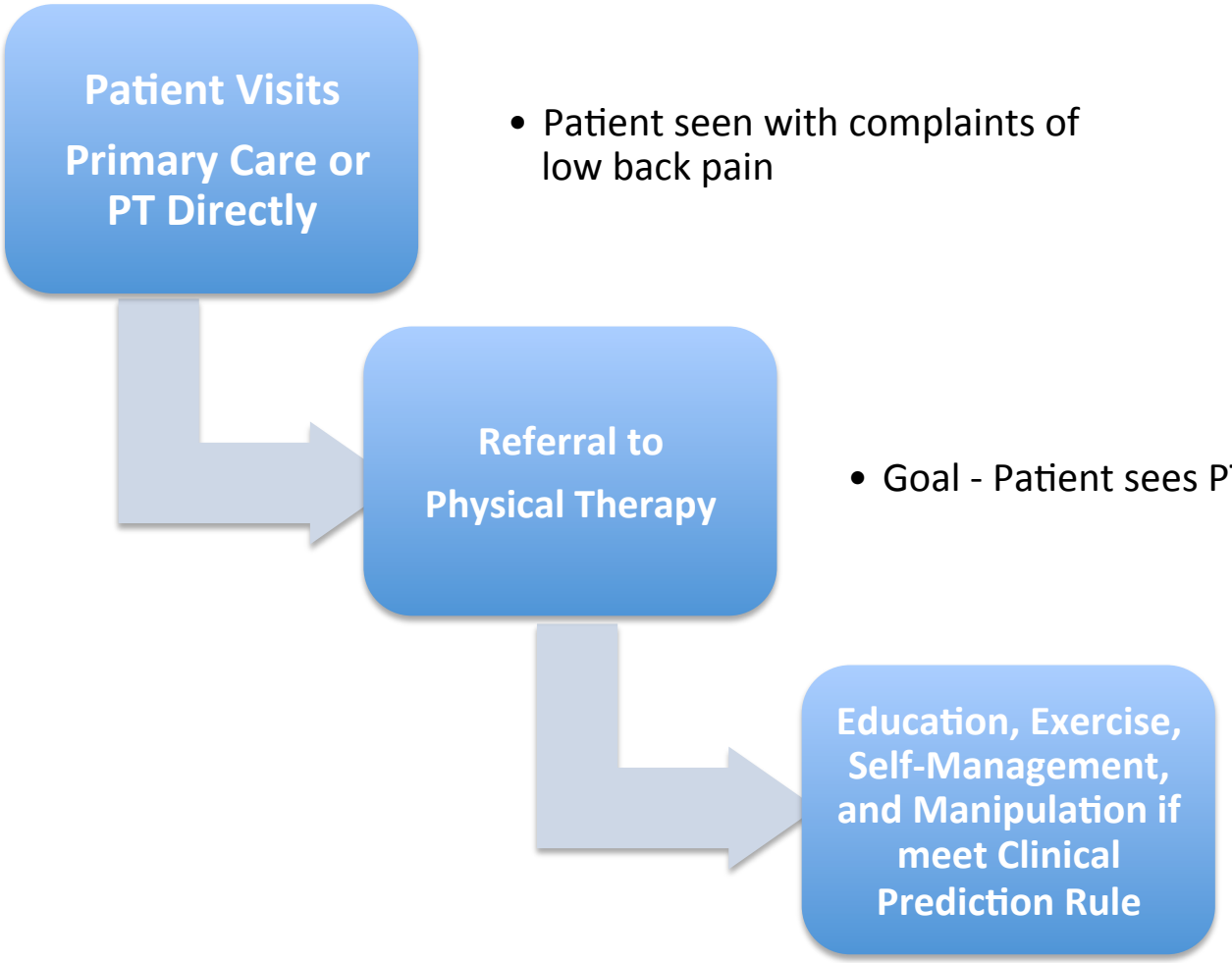
# Colorado Options

- 1: All
- Incentivize health plans to promote a **PT First** approach for non-emergent musculoskeletal problems
- Aim for a lower cost, high value treatment

- 2: Some - LBP
- Target sub-groups of patient populations to Get **PT First**, with the likely first such group to be LBP

VBID + VDO

# Example - 1st Time Episode of Low Back Pain

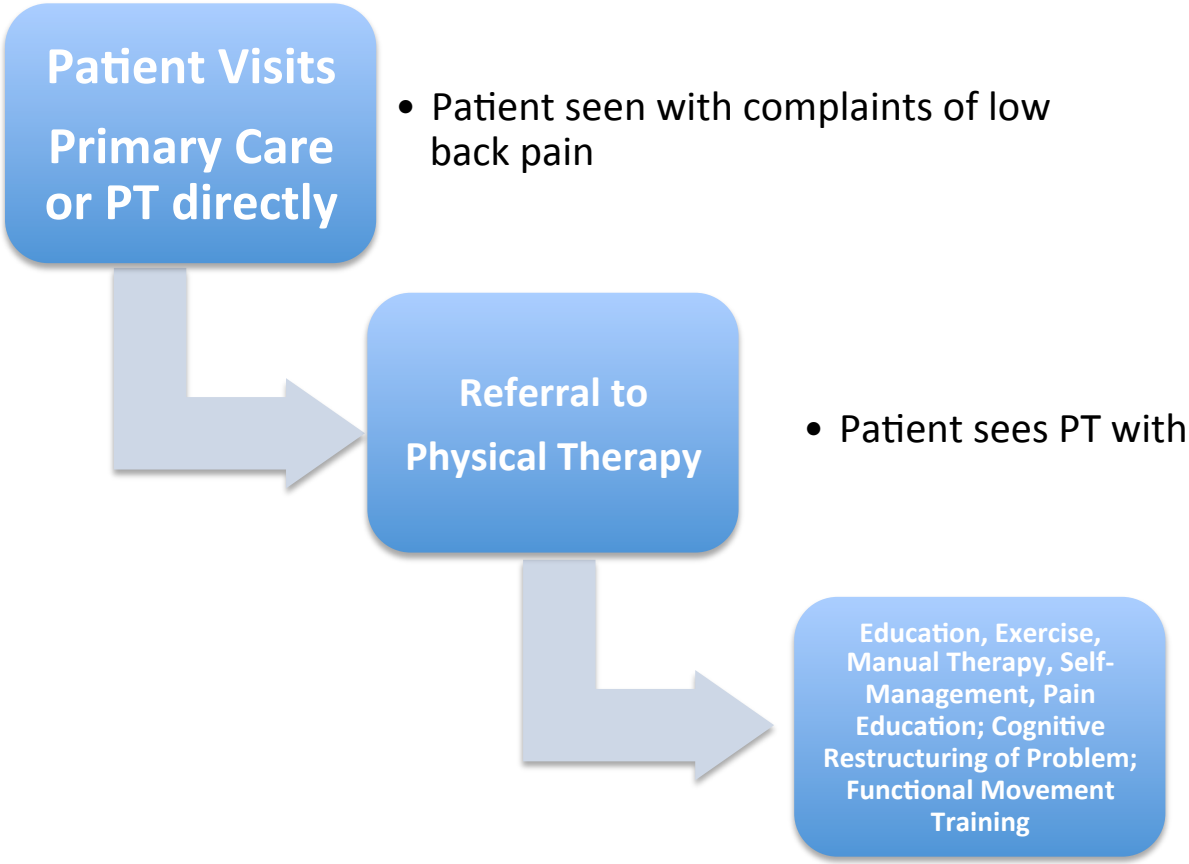



- Patient seen with complaints of low back pain

- Goal - Patient sees PT within 48 hours

- Immediate care
- Goal is prevention of future episodes

# Recurrent or Chronic Low Back Pain




- Patient seen with complaints of low back pain

- Patient sees PT within 48 hours

- Visits according to condition
- Focus is on long term solutions
- Goal pain reduction and increased physical activity and social engagement

Northern Colorado IPA | Northern Colorado Individual Practice Association

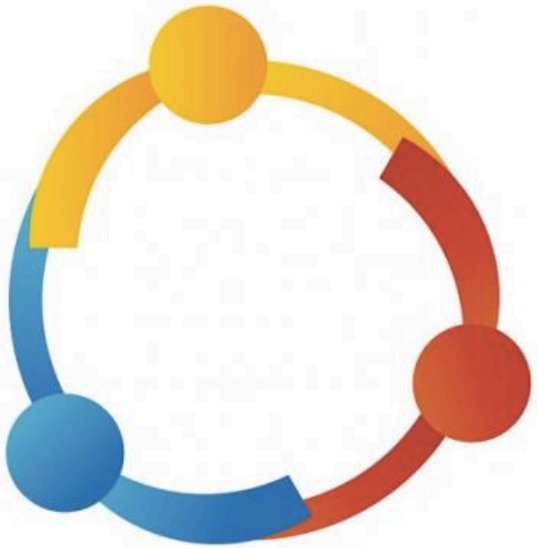
# OUTCOMES TRACKING - CIVHC

*(Benchmark Previous 12-18 months)*

**Primary Outcomes**

- # of lumbar surgeries
- # of MRIs
- Total Expenditures

***Secondary Outcomes***

- Total Cost of Individual
- Benchmark Individual Pre
- Cost Comparison of On Protocol versus Off Protocol
- Number of patients tracked to try PT first

# Discussion