

U S PHYSICAL THERAPY INC /NV
Form DEF 14A
April 05, 2019
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**UNITED STATES
SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION
Washington, D.C. 20549**

SCHEDULE 14A

**PROXY STATEMENT PURSUANT TO SECTION 14(a) OF THE SECURITIES
EXCHANGE ACT OF 1934**

Filed by the Registrant

Filed by a Party other than the Registrant

Check the appropriate box:

- Preliminary Proxy Statement
- Confidential, for Use of the Commission only (as permitted by Rule 14a-6(e)(2))
- Definitive Proxy Statement
- Definitive Additional Materials
- Soliciting Material Pursuant to §240.14a-12

U.S. Physical Therapy, Inc.
(Name of Registrant as Specified in its Charter)

(Name of Person(s) Filing Proxy Statement, if other than the Registrant)

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U. S. PHYSICAL THERAPY, INC.

NOTICE OF 2018 ANNUAL MEETING OF STOCKHOLDERS

DATE: Tuesday, May 21, 2019

TIME: 9:00 a.m. (CDT)

PLACE: 1300 West Sam Houston Parkway South, Suite 300, Houston, Texas 77042

MATTERS TO BE ACTED ON:

1. Election of ten directors to serve until the next annual meeting of stockholders.
2. Advisory vote to approve named executive officer compensation.
3. Ratification of the appointment of Grant Thornton LLP as our independent registered public accounting firm for the year ending December 31, 2019.
4. Consideration of any other matters that may properly come before the meeting or any adjournments.

THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS RECOMMENDS THAT YOU VOTE IN FAVOR OF THE ELECTION OF EACH OF THE TEN NOMINEES FOR DIRECTOR, THE NON-BINDING APPROVAL OF THE NAMED EXECUTIVE OFFICER COMPENSATION AND THE RATIFICATION OF THE APPOINTMENT OF GRANT THORNTON LLP AS OUR INDEPENDENT REGISTERED PUBLIC ACCOUNTING FIRM FOR 2019.

The Board of Directors has set Tuesday, April 2, 2019, as the record date for the Annual Meeting of Stockholders to be held on May 21, 2019 (the Annual Meeting). Only holders of our common stock of record at the close of business on that date will be entitled to notice of and to attend and vote at the Annual Meeting or any adjournments thereof. A complete list of stockholders will be available for examination at the Annual Meeting and at our offices at 1300 West Sam Houston Parkway South, Suite 300, Houston, Texas 77042, for a period of ten days prior to the Annual Meeting.

You are cordially invited to join us at the Annual Meeting. However, to ensure your representation at the Annual Meeting, we request that you return your signed proxy card at your earliest convenience, whether or not you plan to attend the Annual Meeting. Your proxy card will be returned to you if you are present at the Annual Meeting and request its return.

By Order of the Board of Directors,

Richard Binstein, Secretary

April 5, 2019

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U.S. PHYSICAL THERAPY, INC.

**1300 West Sam Houston Parkway South, Suite 300
Houston, Texas 77042
(713) 297-7000**

**PROXY STATEMENT
ANNUAL MEETING OF STOCKHOLDERS
MAY 21, 2019**

Proxy Statement

This Proxy Statement is being provided to stockholders in connection with the solicitation of proxies by the Board of Directors for use at the Annual Meeting of Stockholders (the Annual Meeting) of U.S. Physical Therapy, Inc. (we, us, our, USPT or the Company) to be held on Tuesday, May 21, 2019 at 9:00 a.m. (central time) at the Company's principal executive offices located at 1300 West Sam Houston Parkway, Suite 300, Houston, Texas, 77042.

Proxy Solicitation

Your vote and proxy are being solicited by our Board of Directors (Board of Directors or Board) for use at the Annual Meeting. This Proxy Statement and the enclosed proxy card are being mailed on behalf of our Board of Directors on or about April 9, 2019 to all of our stockholders of record as of the close of business on the record date, Tuesday, April 2, 2019 (the Record Date).

Your presence at the Annual Meeting will not automatically revoke your proxy. You may, however, revoke your proxy at any time prior to its exercise by delivering to us another proxy bearing a later date, by attending the Annual Meeting and voting in person, or by filing a written notice of revocation before the Annual Meeting with Richard Binstein, our Secretary, at our principal executive offices located at 1300 West Sam Houston Parkway South, Suite 300, Houston, Texas 77042. If you receive multiple proxy cards, this indicates that your shares are held in more than one account, such as two brokerage accounts, or are registered in different names. You should vote each of the proxy cards received to ensure that all of your shares are voted.

Your Vote is Important

Whether or not you plan to attend the Annual Meeting, please take time to vote your shares by signing and returning a proxy card as soon as possible.

Proposals To Be Voted On and the Board's Voting Recommendations

The following three proposals are scheduled to be voted on at the Annual Meeting:

- Election of ten director nominees.
- Advisory vote to approve named executive officer compensation.
- Ratification of the appointment of Grant Thornton LLP as our independent registered public accounting firm for the year ending December 31, 2019.

THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS RECOMMENDS THAT YOU VOTE IN FAVOR OF: THE ELECTION OF EACH OF THE TEN NOMINEES FOR DIRECTOR, THE NON-BINDING APPROVAL OF THE NAMED EXECUTIVE OFFICER COMPENSATION, AND THE RATIFICATION OF THE APPOINTMENT OF GRANT THORNTON LLP AS OUR INDEPENDENT REGISTERED PUBLIC ACCOUNTING FIRM FOR THE YEAR ENDING DECEMBER 31, 2019.

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Important Notice Regarding the Availability of Proxy Materials for the Stockholder Meeting to be Held on May 21 2019:

We have elected to provide access to our proxy materials both by sending you this full set of proxy materials, including a Notice of 2019 Annual Meeting of Stockholders, proxy card and Annual Report for the year ended December 31, 2018, and by notifying you of the availability of our proxy materials on the Internet. **The Notice of 2019 Annual Meeting of Stockholders, this Proxy Statement, proxy card and Annual Report for the year ended December 31, 2018 are available at <https://materials.proxyvote.com/90337L>.** The materials on the website are searchable, readable and printable and the website does not have cookies or other tracking devices which identify visitors. To obtain directions to attend the Annual Meeting and vote in person, please contact Richard Binstein, our Secretary, at 800-530-6285 or via email at investorrelations@usph.com.

Who Can Vote:

All holders of record of our common stock at the close of business on April 2, 2019 are entitled to vote at the Annual Meeting. Holders of our common stock are entitled to one vote per share.

Proxies:

Properly executed but unmarked proxies will be voted FOR the election of our ten director nominees, FOR the non-binding approval of named executive officer compensation, and FOR the ratification of the appointment of Grant Thornton LLP as our independent registered public accounting firm for the year ending December 31, 2019. If you withhold your vote for any of the director nominees, this will be counted as a vote **AGAINST** that nominee. If any other matters are properly brought before the Annual Meeting, the persons named in the proxy card will vote your shares as directed by a majority of the Board of Directors.

Quorum:

Only shares of our common stock can be voted, with each share entitling its owner to one vote on all matters that come before the Annual Meeting. The close of business on Tuesday April 2, 2019 was fixed by the Board of Directors as the Record Date for determination of stockholders entitled to vote at the Annual Meeting. The number of shares of our common stock outstanding on the Record Date was 12,761,092. The presence, in person or by proxy, of at least a majority of the shares outstanding on the Record Date is necessary to constitute a quorum at our Annual Meeting. Abstentions will be treated as present for determining a quorum at the Annual Meeting. If a broker holding your shares in street name indicates to us on a proxy card that the broker lacks discretionary authority to vote your shares for all matters at the meeting, we will not consider your shares as present or entitled to vote for any purpose. There is no cumulative voting in the election of directors and, as required by Nevada law, the directors will be elected by a plurality of the votes cast at the Annual Meeting, subject to the requirements of the Company's Corporate Governance Guidelines regarding the need to receive more For votes than Withhold votes, as discussed in more detail below.

Cost of Proxy Solicitation:

We will bear the cost of soliciting proxies. Some of our directors, officers and regular employees may solicit proxies, without additional compensation, personally or by telephone. Proxy materials will also be furnished without cost to brokers and other nominees to forward to the beneficial owners of shares held in their names.

Questions and Additional Information:

You may call our Chief Financial Officer, Lawrance W. McAfee, at 800-580-6285 or email us at investorrelations@usph.com if you have any questions. A copy of our Annual Report on Form 10-K for the year ended December 31, 2018 accompanies this Proxy Statement. **We have filed an Annual Report on Form 10-K for the year ended December 31, 2018 (the Form 10-K) with the Securities and Exchange Commission (the SEC).** You may obtain additional copies of the Form 10-K by downloading it from our website at www.usph.com, by writing to U.S. Physical Therapy, Inc., 1300 West Sam Houston Parkway South, Suite 300, Houston, Texas 77042, Attention: Richard Binstein, Secretary, or by emailing us at investorrelations@usph.com.

PLEASE VOTE — YOUR VOTE IS IMPORTANT

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The accompanying proxy card, unless marked to the contrary, will be voted in favor of the election of Jerald L. Pullins, Christopher J. Reading, Lawrance W. McAfee, Mark J. Brookner, Harry S. Chapman, Kathleen A. Gilmartin, Dr. Bernard A. Harris, Jr., Edward L. Kuntz, Reginald E. Swanson and Clayton K. Trier. All of these nominees are current directors standing for re-election at the Annual Meeting to serve until the next annual meeting of stockholders or until their successor is elected and qualified. The Governance and Nominating Committee, which consists solely of directors who are independent under the applicable New York Stock Exchange (NYSE) listing standards, recommended the nomination of the ten directors to the Board of Directors. Based on that recommendation, the Board nominated such directors for election at the Annual Meeting.

The Board of Directors has affirmatively determined that Messrs. Pullins, Brookner, Chapman, Kuntz, Trier, and Dr. Harris and Ms. Gilmartin are independent under the NYSE listing standards. Messrs. McAfee and Reading, who are both executive officers of the Company, and Mr. Swanson, who is an employee of the Company, were determined not to be independent under the NYSE listing standards. The nominees for director are:

Nominees:	Age	Director Since	Position(s) Held
Jerald L. Pullins	77	2003	Chairman of the Board
Christopher J. Reading	55	2004	President, Chief Executive Officer and Director
Lawrance W. McAfee	64	2004	Executive Vice President, Chief Financial Officer and Director
Mark J. Brookner	74	1990	Director
Harry S. Chapman	74	2010	Director
Kathleen A. Gilmartin	67	2018	Director
Dr. Bernard A. Harris, Jr.	62	2005	Director
Edward L. Kuntz	74	2014	Director
Reginald E. Swanson .	65	2007	Director (and an employee of STAR Physical Therapy, LP (*))
Clayton K. Trier	67	2005	Director

* STAR Physical Therapy, LP is a subsidiary of the Company.

Director Biographies:

Jerald L. Pullins has served on our Board since 2003, and was appointed Chairman of the Board on May 17, 2011. He is currently engaged in the development and management of private enterprises in the healthcare field. From October 2007 to the present, Mr. Pullins has been the Managing Member of SeniorCare Homes, LLC, which develops, owns and operates supervised, residential homes for senior citizens with alzheimer, dementia and other memory impairment conditions. Since January 2013, Mr. Pullins has been Chairman and CEO of Baldwin Brothers Cremation, LLC, which owns and operates facilities providing cremation, funeral and related services. From 2007 to May 2013, he served as Chairman of the Board of Directors of Pet Partners, LLC, a private enterprise involved in the acquisition and management of primary care, small animal veterinary hospitals. Mr. Pullins was elected a director of Live Oak Bank, Inc., a publicly held financial institution, in 2011, and he currently serves on its Governance and Nominating Committee.

Christopher J. Reading was promoted to President and Chief Executive Officer and elected to our Board effective November 1, 2004. Prior to 2004, Mr. Reading served as our Chief Operating Officer since joining us in 2003. From 1990 to 2003, Mr. Reading served in various executive and management positions with HealthSouth Corporation where most recently he served as Senior Vice President of Operations responsible for over 200 facilities located in 10

states. Mr. Reading is a physical therapist.

Lawrance W. McAfee was promoted to Executive Vice President and elected to our Board effective November 1, 2004. Mr. McAfee also serves as our Chief Financial Officer, a position he has held since joining us in 2003. Mr. McAfee's prior experience includes having served as Chief Financial Officer of three public companies and President of two private companies.

Mark J. Brookner has served on our Board since August 1998. Mr. Brookner is currently a private investor. He served as our Chief Financial Officer from 1992 to 1998 and as our Secretary and Treasurer during portions of that period.

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Harry S. Chapman has served on our Board since August 30, 2010. Mr. Chapman is the Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of Chapman Schewe, Inc., a healthcare insurance and employee benefits consulting firm, and since January 1, 2013, also serves as Managing Director with Higginbotham, an insurance, risk management and financial services firm. Previously, he served as a Corporate Senior Vice-President and Managed Care Officer of CIGNA's South Central Region, with responsibility for HMO and PPO plans in several states. Mr. Chapman's experience also includes having served as head of EQUICOR's Health Plan and sales operation in Houston and as a Regional Vice-President for Lincoln National Insurance Company's Central Region.

Kathleen A. Gilmartin joined our Board on May 22, 2018. Ms. Gilmartin is the former President and Chief Executive Officer of Caring Brands International and Interim HealthCare Inc., providers of home health care, skilled nursing, therapy and hospice care. Ms. Gilmartin's career spanned twenty-five years with Interim HealthCare Inc. where she served as President and Chief Executive Officer from September 2008 until her retirement in February 2017. From October 2018 through December 2018, Ms. Gilmartin served as Acting President and Chief Executive Officer of Caring Brands International and Interim Healthcare Inc. Ms. Gilmartin continues to serve as a director of Caring Brands International and Interim Healthcare, Inc. Ms. Gilmartin currently serves as a director of The Alliance of Home Health Quality and Innovation, a non-profit, national consortium of home health care providers and organizations. Ms. Gilmartin also has served as a director of Quick Weight Loss Centers, LLC, a health and wellness company, from July 2017 through June 2018, and as a director of BCI Burke Co., a playground equipment manufacturer, since July 2017. Ms. Gilmartin also is a Registered Nurse.

Dr. Bernard A. Harris, Jr. joined our Board on August 23, 2005. Since 2001, Dr. Harris has been President and Chief Executive Officer of Vesalius Ventures, a venture capital firm that invests in early stage medical informatics and technology. Since 2006, Dr. Harris has served as a Class III director of Sterling Bancshares, Inc., a bank holding company. From 1996 to 2001, he served as Chief Medical Officer and Vice President for Space Hab, an aerospace company. Dr. Harris is a former astronaut, having completed two space shuttle missions. He completed his residency in Internal Medicine at the Mayo Clinic and trained as a flight surgeon at the Aerospace School of Medicine at Brooks Air Force Base.

Edward L. Kuntz has served on our Board since August 26, 2014. Mr. Kuntz is the former Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of Kindred Healthcare, the largest diversified provider of post-acute care services in the United States. From 1998 through May 2014 he served as Chairman of the Board of Directors of Kindred and as Chief Executive Officer from 1998 to 2004. From 2000 through 2016, Mr. Kuntz served as a director of Rotech Healthcare, Inc., one of the largest providers of home medical equipment and related products and services in the United States. Mr. Kuntz also serves as a director of American Electric Technologies, Inc., a provider of power delivery solutions to the energy industry in the U.S. and internationally and is Chairman of its Audit Committee.

Reginald E. Swanson joined our Board on September 6, 2007. Since 2007, Mr. Swanson has been the Managing Director of STAR Physical Therapy, LP, a subsidiary of the Company. Mr. Swanson is founder of STAR Physical Therapy, LLC, and from 1997 to 2007, was its president and managing member. He is a certified athletic trainer and has been involved with sports medicine and physical therapy for over 25 years.

Clayton K. Trier joined our Board on February 23, 2005. Mr. Trier is a private investor. He was a founder and former Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of U. S. Delivery Systems, Inc., which developed the first national network providing same-day delivery service, from 1993 until 1997. Before it was acquired in 1996, U. S. Delivery was listed for two years on the New York Stock Exchange. Mr. Trier was a founder of Digital Music Group, Inc (DMGI) and served as its Chairman of the Board from 2005 through 2008. From 2008 to 2018, Mr. Trier served as a director of St. Luke's Health System, an operator of several hospitals in the greater Houston area, and since 2013 has served as a director of the Baylor St. Luke's Medical Center joint venture. From 2015 through February 2018, Mr. Trier served as a director of Fenix Parts, Inc. (FENX), a leading recycler and reseller of original equipment manufacturer automotive

products.

The persons named on the proxy card will vote FOR all of the nominees for director listed above unless you withhold authority to vote for one or more of the nominees. Under current regulations, a broker is prohibited from voting for directors without receiving instructions from you. As required by Nevada law, nominees will be elected by a plurality of the votes cast at the Annual Meeting. Abstentions and broker non-votes will not be treated as a vote for or against any particular nominee and will not affect the outcome of the election of directors. However, pursuant to the Company's Corporate Governance Guidelines, in any uncontested election of directors, a nominee who receives more withhold votes than FOR votes shall tender his or her resignation to the Board. The Governance and

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Nominating Committee of the Board of Directors will promptly accept such resignation unless there are, in its opinion, highly unusual or mitigating circumstances, in which case the Nominating and Governance Committee may, by unanimous vote of its disinterested members, recommend to the Board to reject the tendered resignation, and the Board will promptly act on, without being bound to accept, that recommendation.

All of the nominees have consented to serve as directors. Our Board has no reason to believe that any of the nominees will be unable to act as a director. However, if any director is unable to serve, the Board may designate a substitute. If a substitute nominee is named, the persons named on the proxy card will vote FOR the election of the substitute nominee.

THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS RECOMMENDS THAT THE STOCKHOLDERS VOTE FOR THE ELECTION OF THE TEN NOMINEES FOR DIRECTOR NAMED IN THIS PROXY STATEMENT.

CORPORATE GOVERNANCE AND BOARD MATTERS

Board Leadership Structure

Our Board is led by an independent Chairman and includes six (five prior to the election of Ms. Gilmartin in May 2018) other independent directors. Mr. Reading, our Chief Executive Officer, Mr. McAfee, our Executive Vice President and Chief Financial Officer, and Mr. Swanson, an employee of one of our subsidiaries, STAR Physical Therapy, LP, are the members of the Board who are not independent. We believe the leadership structure enhances the accountability of the executive management to the Board. Because seven of the ten members of our Board nominated for election are considered independent, we believe the Board is independent from management. Further, separating the Chairman and Chief Executive Officer roles allows Mr. Reading to focus his efforts on running our business and managing the Company in the best interest of our stockholders while we are able to benefit from prior experiences of our independent Board members.

Board Oversight of Risk

Our management is responsible for the Company's day-to-day risk management activities. Our Board, which functions in an oversight role in risk management, focuses on understanding the nature of the risks inherent in our business, including our operations, strategic directions and overall risk management systems. Our Board receives periodic updates on our business operations, financial results, strategy and specific risks related to our business. These updates are communicated through monthly correspondence and presentations by management at Board meetings and through discussions with appropriate management compliance and audit personnel at the meetings of the Board's Audit Committee and Compliance Committee.

In addition, we believe our approach to compensation practices and policies applicable to employees throughout our Company and those followed for our Named Executive Officers (as defined in the Compensation Discussion and Analysis section below) are not reasonably likely to have a material adverse effect on our Company. See Compensation Discussion and Analysis.

Independent Directors

The Board has affirmatively determined the Messrs. Brookner, Chapman, Harris, Kuntz, Pullins, Trier and Ms. Gilmartin have no relationship with the Company or its subsidiaries that would interfere with the exercise of independent judgment in carrying out the responsibilities of a director and are independent, as defined in the NYSE listing standards. Specifically, the Board determined that the foregoing seven nominees are independent as defined in

the NYSE listing standards, and that the directors comprising the Company's Audit Committee are independent as defined in Rule 10A-3(b)(1) under the Securities Exchange Act of 1934 (as amended, the Exchange Act) and the directors comprising the Compensation Committee are independent as defined in Rule 10C-1 under the Exchange Act.

Attendance at Board Meetings and Board Committees

The Board of Directors conducts its business through its meetings and through meetings of certain committees of the Board of Directors. The Board of Directors is comprised of a majority of independent directors as required by the NYSE listing standards and is required to meet at least four times per year. In addition, the independent directors periodically meet as a group in executive session, with the Chairman of the Board presiding over such meetings.

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The Board has the following standing committees: (i) Governance and Nominating, (ii) Compliance, (iii) Compensation, and (iv) Audit. During 2018, the Board of Directors met six times, the Governance and Nominating Committee met one time, the Compliance Committee met four times, the Compensation Committee met nine times and the Audit Committee met seven times. Each of our directors participated in at least 75% of the aggregate meetings of the Board of Directors and the committees on which he or she served.

These committees are constituted as follows:

Governance and Nominating Committee

The Governance and Nominating Committee currently consists of Messrs. Pullins (Chairman), Harris and Trier, all of whom have been determined to be independent, as defined in the NYSE listing standards and the rules of the SEC. The function of the committee is to select, screen and recommend to the full Board nominees for election as directors, including any nominees proposed by stockholders who have complied with the procedures described below. The committee also has ongoing responsibility for oversight review of Board performance and ensuring each Board member's continuing commitment to the Board and the Company's goals and objectives. Additional functions include regularly assessing the appropriate size of the Board, and whether any vacancies on the Board are expected due to retirement or otherwise. In the event that vacancies are anticipated, or otherwise arise, the committee will consider various potential candidates for director. Candidates may come to the attention of the committee through current Board members, stockholders, or other persons. The committee may also hire third parties to identify, to evaluate, or to assist in identifying or evaluating potential nominees should it be determined necessary. The committee is required to meet at least annually and operates under a written charter, a copy of which is available on our website at www.usph.com.

Nomination Criteria. In its consideration of Board candidates, the Governance and Nominating Committee considers the following criteria: the candidate's general understanding of the health care sector, marketing, finance and other disciplines relevant to the success of a publicly-traded company; strategic business contacts and regard or reputation in the community, other board affiliations, industry and civic affairs; financial, regulatory and business experience; integrity, honesty and reputation; size of the Board of Directors; and regulatory obligations. In the case of incumbent directors whose terms of office are set to expire, the committee reviews each such director's overall service to the Company during said director's terms, including the number of meetings attended, level of participation, quality of performance, and whether the director continues to meet the independence standards set forth in the applicable SEC rules and regulations and the NYSE listing standards. In the case of new director candidates, the questions of independence and financial expertise are important to determine which roles can be performed by the candidate, and the committee preliminarily determines whether the candidate meets the independence standards set forth in the SEC rules and regulations and the NYSE listing standards, and the level of the candidate's financial expertise. In accordance with the Company's Corporate Governance Guidelines, incumbent Directors who have achieved the age of 78 as of the date of the Annual Meeting shall not be eligible for re-election to the Board at such Annual Meeting without the unanimous consent and approval of the Board. Newly proposed nominees for director who have achieved the age of 77 as of the date of the Annual Meeting shall not be eligible for nomination, appointment or election to the Board. Candidates are first screened by the committee, and if approved by the committee, then they are screened by other members of the Board. The full Board approves the final nomination(s) based on recommendations from the committee. The Chairman of the Board, acting on behalf of the full Board, will extend the formal invitation to become a nominee of the Board of Directors. Qualified candidates for membership on the Board will be considered without regard to race,