



NCBPTE Updates

#11 | June 2024

THE NORTH CAROLINA BOARD OF PHYSICAL THERAPY EXAMINERS

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Regulatory Spotlight

Updated Position Statement: Performance of Medical Procedures Requested of PT Licensees in Healthcare Settings

(Now includes: Performance of Finger Blood Specimens and Removal of Sutures or Staples by a PT)

The Board carefully applies the standards specified in Board Rule 21 NCAC 48C .0101 when developing responses to scope of practice questions and updating position statements. Position statements are usually created by the Board in response to scope of practice questions and fact patterns that are commonly encountered by licensees. The purpose of a position statement is to provide guidance, direction and clarity to everyday clinical and administrative situations in the practice of physical therapy using the rubric of the NC PT Practice Act and Board rules. Position statements are not exhaustive and do not have the force of law; rather they apply the existing law and rules to a specific situation. The Board's position statements can be found on the Board website ([Position Statements](#)).

Position statements are routinely reviewed every two years by the Board to ensure continued relevance and accuracy. At its June 2024 quarterly meeting, the Board reviewed and updated several position statements to reflect prevailing standards of physical therapy practice. Additional position statements identified as requiring updates will be reviewed by the Board at a future meeting and updates posted on the website. The following position statement was updated June 5, 2024.

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Physical therapy licensees are often asked to perform medical procedures related to the overall care of a patient that are not within the definition of physical therapy, nor are they presumed to be precluded by the practice acts of other health care disciplines. Examples would include, but are not limited to, assessment of bowel sounds, PT/INR, suture and staple removal, urine specimens, PCR testing for respiratory, urinalysis, GI or wounds, and finger sticks.

The performance of these procedures is not considered part of the scope of practice for physical therapy; however, it would not be a violation of the North Carolina Physical Therapy Practice Act for a physical therapist (PT) or physical therapist assistant (PTA) to perform these medical procedures provided that the PT or PTA has been properly trained and is competent and makes it clear to the patient that this procedure is not physical therapy. Moreover, physical therapy licensees cannot bill for their time performing non-physical therapy procedures as physical therapy. It is also important to note that the supervising PT is ultimately responsible for the activities of the PTA.

In most cases, the interpretation of the results of medical procedures are left to the primary healthcare professional requesting those tests or measures. If the patient does not have a primary

healthcare provider, it is the responsibility of the PT licensee to assure the patient is referred to a provider who is able to address interpretation of test results.

The PT or PTA should communicate the results to the appropriate health professional so the health professional can interpret and communicate the results to the physician to make any necessary modifications to the patient's treatment plan.

Lastly, the NCBPTE cannot speak for other Boards as to whether the performance of these medical procedures would violate the practice acts of other health care practitioners. The NCBPTE can only say that it is not a violation of the North Carolina Physical Therapy Practice Act.

The Board has been asked about use of pulse oximetry, which is used by PT licensees to monitor and assess patient vital signs and is within the physical therapy scope of practice. Questions have also been submitted to the Board about use of oxygen titration. When pulse oximetry is performed in the context of monitoring patients with oxygen titration, a physician referral is required, as decisions regarding oxygen titration would be considered within the scope of practice of medicine.



Disciplinary Actions on Board website

When the Board takes disciplinary action against a licensee, a brief statement of the conduct and the sanctions imposed will appear on the Board website page for a period that coincides with the length of the disciplinary action, one year, whichever is greater, or the license has lapsed. Additionally, licensees with consent orders who fail to meet the conditions in their order may remain on the web page until all requirements are met.

To review the most recent Board actions, go to the Board website and click on the [Complaints & Discipline](#) tab. Disciplinary orders for individual licensees may also be viewed under the Licensee Lookup tab on the home page. To access documents related to the disciplinary action:

- Enter either name of licensee or license number and click Search button.
- Click on the license number.
- Click on the highlighted link in “Note/Disciplinary Actions/Restrictions” to view documents.

Reporting Complaints to the Board

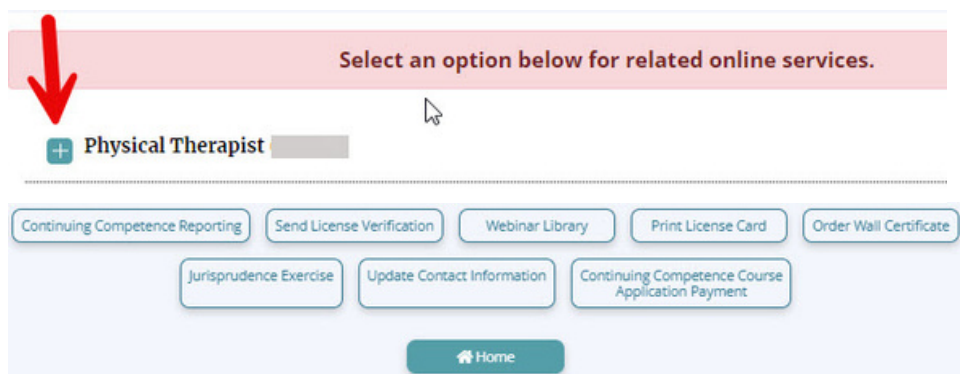
The Board is tasked with the duty to investigate complaints regarding physical therapists or physical therapist assistants who allegedly violate the NC PT Practice Act or the Board rules.

To enable the Board to process and investigate a potential violation, a complainant must submit details in writing and to the Board office. Complaints may be submitted via the [online complaint form](#) or the form can be downloaded from the website and emailed or mailed to the Board office. Complete, accurate, and detailed information provided on the complaint form helps to ensure complaints are processed in a timely and efficient matter.

Did you know?

Have you visited your personal dashboard on the Board website lately???

Last summer, the Board rolled out website improvements for applicants and licensees. Now, both can log into the Board website and access their personal dashboard. For licensees, the dashboard provides easy access for updating contact information, printing a current license card, and accessing continuing competence reporting among other things. Remember to choose the plus (+) sign beside your license to populate all options.



If you’ve forgotten the email used for your account, you can use your license number to log in. Be sure to include the “P” or “A” designation. You will then be prompted to add/update your password.