



# NCBPTE Updates

#16 | November 2024

THE NORTH CAROLINA BOARD OF PHYSICAL THERAPY EXAMINERS

PTBoard@NCPTBoard.org



## Regulatory Spotlight

### Communication of Discharge Plans to a Patient

*What are the responsibilities of the physical therapist as it relates to the patient plan of care? More specifically, what is the responsibility of a physical therapist in communicating a discharge plan to a patient if the employer is limiting and/or prohibiting the relaying of information?*

The North Carolina Board of Physical Therapy Examiners recently received an inquiry about physical therapists being limited by an employer on relaying information to the patient related to the patient plan of care, and whether a failure to communicate directly with the patient would be a violation of the Board rules. Below is the response of the Board attorney to these questions.

Board rule [21 NCAC 48C .0102](#) describes the responsibilities of the physical therapist as it relates to the patient plan of care. After the physical therapist determines the patient plan of care and which elements are appropriate for delegation, the physical therapist shall enter and review chart documentation, reexamine and reassess the patient, revise the patient plan of care, if necessary, based on the needs of the patient, and establish a discharge plan that includes a discharge summary or episode of care for each patient.

In addition, the Board rule in [21 NCAC 48C .0101\(d\) \(2\)](#) states (in part) that physical therapy includes:

- (2) alleviating impairment and functional limitation by designing, implementing, and modifying therapeutic interventions that include the following:
  - (A) coordination, **communication** and documentation;
  - (B) **patient/client-related instruction**

Implicit in all of these responsibilities is the need of the physical therapist to communicate the plan of care to the patient and create a record such that other healthcare providers could understand the plan. A clearly written plan of care serves to benefit the patient and allows others to track patient progress and needs in the overall effort to rehabilitate the patient.

In addition, Board rule [21 NCAC 48C .0102\(l\) and \(m\)](#) lays out very specific information which should be included in every evaluation or treatment. Included is the requirement to note the patient's progress toward achieving goals. If the patient is being discharged, the notes should clearly indicate why and whether the goals in the plan of care have been achieved.

If the discharge notes are cryptic or intentionally vague, there is an inherent lack of communication with the patient and other healthcare providers. Using terminology that only internal staff members would be able to interpret in connection with a discharge disposition recommendation would be a violation of the Board rules.

While the Board is not in a position to offer opinions about employer policies or hypotheticals related to policies, communication and interaction with the patient is an integral part of the practice of physical therapy.

Consult the Board website for the complete sections of the rules mentioned above.

### 2025 License Renewal Now Open

The renewal process is completed ONLINE through your personal dashboard on the Board Website.

All NEWLY licensed PTs and PTAs in the current license year (February 1, 2024 - January 31, 2025) must also renew by Friday, January 31, 2025 (5 pm EST). For the first renewal, NO continuing competence reporting is required.

All licensees are encouraged to finish the renewal process by January 15, 2025 to avoid potential issues.

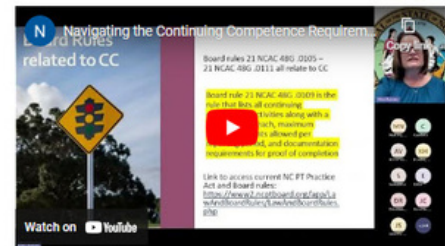
## Hurricane Helene Information

Pursuant to NC Session Law 2024-53 passed October 25, 2024, the Board is working on measures to assist licensees who have been impacted by Hurricane Helene. If you live or work in one of the NC counties designated by FEMA as eligible for individual and/or public assistance ([link to map](#)), you may be eligible for delayed license renewal. This includes the provisions of additional time to complete your continuing competence requirement if you are in the reporting period January 1, 2023 - January 31, 2025, as well as additional time to pay the renewal fee. Visit the Board website [ncptboard.org](http://ncptboard.org) on or around December 2, 2024, for instructions on how to apply for delayed license renewal.

## Questions about the Continuing Competence Requirement?

Click on this recently recorded and updated video that reviews the NC PT Practice Act and Board rules pertaining to continuing competence. Completion of this recorded webinar and review of the supplemental Q/A transcript will earn (1) continuing competence point. Instructions are posted in the webinar library.

Also in the webinar library, a short video that provides information on navigating the continuing competence report summary and recording your completed activities.



## Questions about PTA Scope of Work and Supervision?



This revised, updated webinar reviews the NC PT Practice Act and Board Rules surrounding scope of work of the PTA, appropriate delegation of treatment to the PTA, supervisory requirements of both the PT and PTA, and Board answers to common questions involving the PTA. Completion of this webinar AND review of the Q/A transcript from the live presentation is required to earn (1) contact hour therefore equaling (1) continuing competence point toward your continuing competence requirement. Instructions are posted in the webinar library. Below is an excerpt from the Q/A webinar transcript.

**Questions**

**Discussion**

**Board Rules/Position Statements/  
Board Interpretation**

Are there specific rules about what 'testing' a PTA can do?	A PTA may assist in the practice of PT only to the extent allowed by the supervising PT.	21 NCAC 48C .0201
Can a PT complete a BEAS balance test or 6 Minute Walk test?	PT assesses PTA competence to do any task (test, measure or treatment intervention) and will only delegate if the PTA is competent and it is safe and effective for the patient.	21 NCAC 48C .0102 (a-d, f-g)  Supervision and Documentation Position Statement
Can the PTA perform a progress note where they are obtaining objective measurements and treatment while sending the note to the PT for co-sign where the PT will continue to assess the current POC?	In general co-signing is not required by the NC PT Practice Act and Board rules. Specific situations requiring a co-signature are addressed in the Supervision and Documentation Position Statement.  Employer or Payor policy may differ. When a licensee is dealing with a situation where state law, federal law, payer policy, and employer policy differs, the specific policy should be clarified directly by that entity. In general, following the most restrictive policy is a good rule of thumb in that all requirements will be met.	Scope of Authority of PTA to assist PT w/ FCE Position Statement

**Board office staff hours are 7:30 am – 4 pm, Monday-Friday, to respond to calls and email inquiries. Please schedule office appointments in advance, Tuesday through Thursday, 10 am – 2 pm, by emailing [PTBoard@NCPTBoard.org](mailto:PTBoard@NCPTBoard.org). Provide name, email address, best contact number, and a brief description of appointment needs. The Board office will be closed on the following dates: November 28-29; December 24-26, and January 1, 2025.**