



NCBPT E Updates

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THE NORTH CAROLINA BOARD OF PHYSICAL THERAPY EXAMINERS

PTBoard@NCPTBoard.org



Regulatory Spotlight

Is “DPT” a protected term in North Carolina?

by David Gadd, Board Attorney

The North Carolina Board of Physical Therapy Examiners has had numerous inquiries regarding whether the use of the letters “DPT” by employees of a national health club chain may be used when the employees are holding themselves out as “Dynamic Personal Trainers” and are not doctors of physical therapy.

The North Carolina Physical Therapy Practice Act does not define specific terms or titles which are protected. Rather, the statute is more general in nature and states as follows:

NCGS 90-270.102. Unlawful Practice.

Except as otherwise authorized in this Article, if any person, firm, or corporation shall:

- (2) Use in connection with any person's name any letters, words, numerical codes, or insignia indicating or implying that the person is a physical therapist or physical therapist assistant, or applicant with “Graduate” status, unless the person is licensed or authorized in accordance with this Article;

said person, firm, or corporation shall be guilty of a Class 1 misdemeanor. Each act of such unlawful practice shall constitute a distinct and separate offense.

The purpose of the statute is to protect the public and prevent consumers from being misled into believing they are receiving physical therapy from a licensed physical therapist, when they are not. Whether a violation of the statute occurs is typically very fact specific based on what the personal trainer does and what the consumer perceives he or she is receiving from the personal trainer.

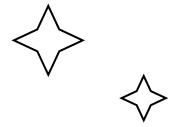
As an example, if a bank, through a marketing campaign, described its tellers as the most “Dependable and Personable Tellers” and put DPT on name tags, there would be little to no risk of misleading the consumer and no confusion about whether the teller is a doctor of physical therapy. A consumer has no expectation of receiving therapeutic exercise, rehabilitative procedures or any other treatments or interventions associated with physical therapy while transacting business at the bank. However, if a personal trainer uses the same or similar treatment modalities provided by a physical therapist while using the letters “DPT” in conjunction with his or her name, there is a high likelihood of misleading the public.

Such activity may be a violation of the aforementioned statute absent clarification that the provider is not a licensed physical therapist. The statute makes the violation a misdemeanor under the State’s criminal laws and prosecution would be left to the District Attorney’s office in the judicial district in which the violation occurred.



David Gadd is a partner in the law firm of Satsky & Silverstein, LLP in Raleigh, North Carolina, and focuses on his practice on administrative and real estate law. He has been the Board attorney since the retirement of long-time Board attorney John Silverstein in 2020.

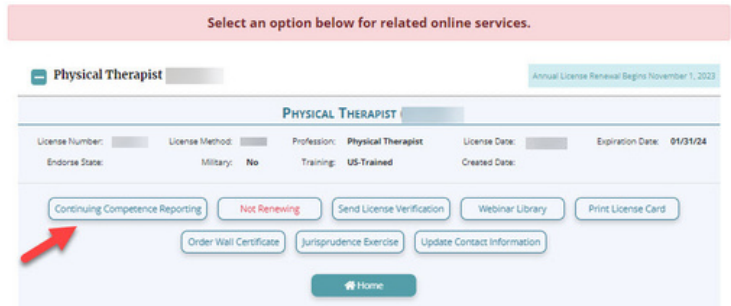
Did you know? It is your responsibility to notify the Board within 30 days of any changes in relevant contact information (name, home and/or business address, email, phone numbers) to ensure timely receipt of important correspondence related to licensure and physical therapy regulation in North Carolina (Board Rule: 21 NCAC 48F. 0105).



Renew License on Your Personal Dashboard



Your personal dashboard on the Board website is the place to begin the renewal process. After logging in, check your Continuing Competence Summary page to verify your reporting period. While you must renew your license annually, you complete the continuing competence requirements every 25 months.



License renewal opened on November 1 and must be completed by Wednesday, January 31, 2024 (5 pm EST).

All **NEWLY** licensed PTs and PTAs in the current license year (February 1, 2023 - January 31, 2024) must also renew by Wednesday, January 31, 2024 (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, 2024 to avoid potential issues.

Did you know?

Many questions about continuing competence were answered during the live webinar on October 26.

If you missed it, a recording was posted to the webinar library (accessed from your personal dashboard).

Completion of this webinar AND review of the attached Q/A transcript from the live presentation is required to earn (1) continuing competence point.

NOTE: If you attended the October 26 live webinar and have NOT received your course completion certificate, contact the Board Office. Add "Course Certificate" in the subject line.

Frequently Asked Questions about Continuing Competence

I just got licensed in North Carolina earlier this year and my assigned continuing competence reporting period is January 1, 2024 - January 31, 2026. I have already taken some courses in 2023. Will these courses count? When will I be able to access my continuing competence report?"

Licensees are always encouraged to take continuing education courses. However, for courses to be recorded in your continuing competence report, they must be completed within the timeframe of your reporting period. Any course or other activity completed prior to January 1, 2024, or after January 31, 2026, is not able to be recorded in the January 1, 2024 - January 31, 2026 reporting period.

A continuing competence report may be accessed through a licensee's personal dashboard on or shortly after each February 1 of the beginning of that respective reporting period (for periods beginning January 1, 2024, reports will be available on or shortly after February 1, 2024).

Review Board rule **21 NCAC 48G .0109 CONTINUING COMPETENCE ACTIVITIES** for details surrounding each activity/category of activities.

Mark your calendar!

Thursday, November 30
6 - 7 pm (EST)

Live/Interactive Webinar on
NC PT/PTA License Renewal
by NCBPTE Deputy Director,
Ellen Roeber

Meeting link will be posted closer to date.
The event will be recorded for future viewing and will be available through licensee's dashboard in the webinar library.

Board office staff hours are 7:30 am – 4 pm, Monday-Friday, to respond to calls and email inquiries. Schedule in-office appointments in advance, Tuesday through Thursday, 10 am – 2 pm by emailing PTBoard@NCPTBoard.org. Provide name, email address, best contact number, and a brief description of appointment needs.