

**Position Statement – North Carolina Board of Physical Therapy Examiners**

**1. Supervision and Documentation (Notes)**

**Posted – 1998**

**Updated – April 5, 2010, Sept. 23, 2010, June 13, 2013, Oct. 21, 2014, June 17, 2015, Sept. 18, 2024**

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The chart below answers questions about the supervision, note-writing authority, and responsibilities of physical therapist assistants, physical therapy aides, and students. Remember that supervision must only be performed by NC licensed physical therapists and, when delegated by a NC licensed physical therapist, NC licensed physical therapist assistants.

	<b>PT</b>	<b>PTA</b>	<b>Physical Therapy Aide</b>	<b>PT Student</b>	<b>PTA Student</b>
<b>Supervision* Required:</b>	No	Works under PT	On-site* by PT or PTA	By PT or PTA <sup>1</sup>	By PT or PTA
<b>Treatments:</b>					
Interprets orders	Yes	No	No	Yes	No
Evaluates patient	Yes	No	No	Yes	No
Establishes Treatment Programs	Yes	No	No	Yes	No
Performs Treatment Program	Yes	Yes, if activity is commensurate with training/ability, and under appropriate supervision	Yes, if activity is commensurate with training/ability, and under appropriate supervision	Yes, if activity is commensurate with training/ability, and under appropriate supervision	Yes, if activity is commensurate with training/ability, and under appropriate supervision
<b>Modifies Program:</b>	Yes	Minor changes consistent with the established patient care plan	No	Yes	Minor changes consistent with the established patient care plan
<b>Final Visit:</b>	Yes	Yes, but PT is responsible for establishing the d/c plan which includes when treatment ends/final treatment date	No	Yes	No

<b>CHARTS:</b>	<b>PT</b>	<b>PTA</b>	<b>Physical Therapy Aide</b>	<b>PT Student</b>	<b>PTA Student</b>
<b>Writes:</b>					
Daily Notes	Yes	Yes	Description of treatment or recording patient's comments	Yes	Yes
Discharge Evaluation Summary	Yes	No	No	Yes	No
Brief Discharge Notes	Yes	Yes <sup>2</sup>	No	Yes	Yes <sup>2</sup>
<b>Notes Required to be Cosigned:</b>					
Initial Evaluations	No	N/A	N/A	Yes	N/A
Reassessments	No	N/A	N/A	Yes	Yes
Notes with Significant Incidents	No	Yes	Yes - limited to description of incident only	Yes	N/A
Daily Notes	No	No	Yes	Yes <sup>3</sup>	Yes
Discharge Evaluation Summary	N/A	N/A	N/A	Yes	N/A

The only persons defined in the NC Physical Therapy Practice Act are physical therapists, physical therapist assistants, and physical therapy aides. Subsequently, any other licensed or unlicensed healthcare provider who aides in the provision of physical therapy services within a physical therapy plan of care is functioning as a physical therapy aide. All supervision requirements and other Board Rules apply regardless of who is functioning as a physical therapy aide.

**\*Location of Supervision:** On-site, per Board Rule 21 NCAC 48A .0105(9), means the supervising licensee is present in the department or facility where services are provided, is immediately available to the person being supervised and maintains continued involvement in aspects of treatment sessions in which students completing clinical requirements or physical therapy aides are involved in components of care.

If a physical therapist assistant or physical therapy aide is involved in the patient care plan, the patient must be reassessed by the supervising physical therapist every 60 days or 13 visits, whichever occurs first.

### **Types of Supervision:**

#### PTA by PT

- PT must always be responsible for adequate supervision of the PTA.
- PT must always be available to the PTA and must have first-hand knowledge<sup>4</sup> about the patient.
- PT must follow-up on patient and program as appropriate.
- PT must be involved in discharge planning.
- PT must determine the PTA is competent in performing all delegated tasks.

#### Physical Therapy Aide

##### by PT or PTA

- PT or, when delegated, the PTA must provide on-site supervision to the physical therapy aide.
- PT must determine whether the aide is competent in performing all delegated tasks.
- PT must delegate aide supervision to the PTA when appropriate.

### **NOTES**

<sup>1</sup>A PTA may only supervise a PT student performing procedures that the PTA is licensed and competent to perform. (For example, a PTA may not supervise a PT student who is doing an evaluation.)

<sup>2</sup> If the note is strictly a summary that reviews information in the chart and does not include evaluation or assessment.

<sup>3</sup>A PTA may only cosign a PT student's treatment note when the PTA is licensed and competent to perform the treatment procedures. (For example, a PTA may not cosign a PT student's evaluation.)

<sup>4</sup> First-hand knowledge means the PT has completed the patient's medical record review including the physical therapy plan of care, or had direct patient contact to determine the physical therapy plan of care, or revisions to the physical therapy plan of care.

**REFERENCES:** All from the NC Physical Therapy Practice Act and Board Rules. G.S.90-270.90 (2-5); 21 NCAC 48A .0105 (9); 21 NCAC 48C .0101 (c); 21 NCAC 48C .0102 (a-m); 21 NCAC 48C .0103 (b); 21 NCAC 48C .0201 (a-f); 21 NCAC 48C .0401; 21 NCAC 48C .0402 (a-d); 21 NCAC 48C .0601.