

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

### **12. Removal of Sutures or Staples by a PT (see also Position Statement 6- Performance of Non-physical Therapy Procedures)**

**Adopted – August 11, 2006 (PT); July 13, 2007 (PTA)**

**Reviewed – September 23, 2010, June 17, 2015, September 2, 2020, June 8, 2022**

**Updated- June 6, 2018**

Licenses are often asked to perform activities related to a patient's overall care that are not within the definition of physical therapy, nor are they precluded by the practice acts of other health care disciplines. Examples would include, but are not limited to, assessment of bowel sounds, urine specimens and finger sticks. Although such activities can be performed by a licensee, they should not be referred to or billed for as physical therapy.

In most cases, the interpretation of the results of such activities should be left to the person directing that such activities be performed on the patient.

### **Position on Removal of Sutures or Staples by a Physical Therapist**

*Posted on NC Board of PT Examiners Web Page – August 11, 2006*

Q: Can a physical therapist remove sutures or staples?

A: While not a part of the scope of physical therapy practice, the Board has determined that a properly trained physical therapist can remove sutures or staples provided that he/she makes it very clear to the patient that this is not physical therapy and does not bill it as such.

### **Position on Removal of Sutures or Staples by a Physical Therapist Assistant**

*Posted on NC Board of PT Examiners Web Page – July 13, 2007*

Q: Can a physical therapist assistant remove sutures and staples?

A: Since this procedure is not within the scope of practice of physical therapy, the Board does not take a position on whether a PTA can remove sutures or staples; however, it is important to reiterate the basic premise that the supervising physical therapist is ultimately responsible for the activities of the PTA.

Kathy Arney, PT, MA, Executive Director  
NC Board of Physical Therapy Examiners  
8300 Health Park Suite 233  
Raleigh, NC 27615  
Phone: 1-919-490-6393 / 800-800-8982  
Fax: 1-919-490-5106  
Email: [karney@ncptboard.org](mailto:karney@ncptboard.org)  
Web: [www.ncptboard.org](http://www.ncptboard.org)