

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 Medical Procedures Requested of Physical Therapy Licensees in Healthcare Settings)

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

Licensees 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

Can a physical therapist remove sutures or staples?

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

Can a physical therapist assistant remove sutures and staples?

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.

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