

**DISTRICT OF  
COLUMBIA  
MUNICIPAL  
REGULATIONS  
for PHYSICAL  
THERAPY  
ASSISTANTS**

**CHAPTER 82                    PHYSICAL THERAPY ASSISTANTS**

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**CHAPTER 82                    PHYSICAL THERAPY ASSISTANTS**

**8200                    GENERAL PROVISIONS**

- 8200.1                This chapter shall apply to applicants for and holders of a license to practice as a physical therapy assistant.
- 8200.2                Chapter 40 (Health Occupations: General Rules) and 41 (Health Occupations: Administrative Procedures) shall supplement this chapter.

**8201                    TERM OF LICENSE**

- 8201.1                Subject to § 8201.2, a license issued pursuant to this chapter shall expire at 12:00 midnight of January 31 of each odd-numbered year.
- 8201.2                If the Director changes the renewal system pursuant to § 4006.3 of chapter 40 of this title, a license issued pursuant to this chapter shall expire at 12:00 midnight of the last day of the month of the birthdate of the holder of the license or other date established by the Director.

**8202                    EDUCATIONAL REQUIREMENTS**

- 8202.1                Except as otherwise provided in this subtitle, an applicant applying for a license to practice as a physical therapy assistant shall establish to the satisfaction of the Board that the applicant has successfully completed an educational program in physical therapy appropriate for preparation as a physical therapy assistant, which is accredited by an agency recognized by the Secretary of the Department of Education or the Council of Postsecondary Accreditation.
- 8202.2                An applicant shall submit with a completed application an official certified transcript of the applicant’s educational record and a certificate of graduation from the educational institution.

**8203                    APPLICANTS EDUCATED OUTSIDE OF THE UNITED STATES**

8203.1 The Board may grant a license to practice as a physical therapist assistant to an applicant who has been educated outside of the United States if the applicant:

- (a) Provides proof from the Physical Therapist Assistant Educational Equivalency Review (PTA-EER) that the applicant's education is substantially equivalent to the requirements of physical therapist assistants educated in an education program accredited in the United States;
- (b) Passes the Board-approved English proficiency examination, if the applicant's native language is not English; and
- (c) Complies with the examination requirements of Section 8204.

8203.2 A determination that the applicant's education is "substantially equivalent" shall include the following findings:

- (a) The applicant graduated from a physical therapist assistant education program that prepares the applicant to engage without restriction in the practice of physical therapist assistance;
- (b) Written proof that the applicant's school is recognized by its own ministry of education or equivalent governmental authority; and
- (c) Completion of a credentials evaluation as directed by a credentialing board or equivalent body that determines the candidate has met uniform criteria for educational requirements as further established by rule.

#### **8204 LICENSURE BY EXAMINATION**

8204.1 An applicant for licensure as a physical therapy assistant by examination shall initiate the application process by submitting a completed application together with the appropriate application fee and the documentation required by §8202.2.

8204.2 An applicant for licensure as a physical therapy assistant shall have pre-approval from the Board before taking any licensure examination. Only an applicant who has graduated from an accredited physical therapy assistant program may be approved by the Board to take the physical therapy assistant licensure examination.

8204.3 An applicant for licensure by examination shall take and pass the National Physical Therapist Examination ("NPTE") and the District of Columbia jurisprudence examination for physical therapy assistants.

- 8204.4 Following approval from the Board to take the applicable examinations, the applicant may take the national examination and the District jurisprudence examination in any order.
- 8204.5 The passing score on the national examination shall be determined by the body administering the examination.
- 8204.6 The District jurisprudence examination shall be developed and administered by the Board or, a body approved by the Board, on laws and rules pertaining to the practice of physical therapy in the District of Columbia.
- 8204.7 The District jurisprudence examination may consist of questions on District of Columbia laws pertaining to the practice of physical therapy including the Act, this chapter, and chapters 40 and 41 of this title. The passing score of the District examination shall be determined by the Board.
- 8204.8 An applicant for licensure who does not pass either examination on the first attempt shall seek and obtain Board approval for any subsequent attempts to retake the examination. Before the Board may approve an applicant for subsequent testing beyond three (3) attempts, an applicant shall submit proof satisfactory to the Board of having completed any remediation as determined by the Board
- 8204.9 If the Board determines that an applicant has engaged in or has attempted to engage in conduct that subverts or undermines the integrity of either the national examination or the District jurisprudence examination, the Board may disqualify the applicant from taking the examinations. Examples of such conduct may include, but are not limited to the following:
- (a) Utilizing in any manner recalled or memorized examination questions;
  - (b) Failing to comply with all test center security procedures;
  - (c) Attempting to communicate with other examinees during the test; or
  - (d) Copying or sharing examination questions or answers or portions of questions or answers.
- 8204.10 All occurrences of any violation set forth in § 8204.9 shall be recorded in the official records of the Board. Board action may include, but is not limited to the following:
- (a) Disqualifying test results of the applicant's examinations;
  - (b) Disqualifying the applicant, permanently or for a specified period of time, from eligibility for the examinations;

- (c) Disqualifying the applicant, permanently or for a specified period of time, from eligibility for licensure; or
- (d) Revocation, suspension, or imposition of probationary conditions on a license issued to the applicant.

## **8205 LICENSURE BY ENDORSEMENT**

8205.1 The Board shall issue a license by endorsement to a physical therapy assistant who has a valid, unrestricted license in good standing from another jurisdiction of the United States and who meets all other requirements of this section.

8205.2 An applicant for licensure by endorsement as a physical therapy assistant shall submit with a completed application the following:

- (a) Official, certified proof of licensure as a physical therapy assistant in good standing from another jurisdiction of the United States;
- (b) Official, certified proof, from the body administering the examination, that the applicant has passed the Board-approved national licensure examination for a physical therapy assistant; and
- (c) Proof pursuant to § 8202.1.

8205.3 An applicant shall take and pass the District of Columbia jurisprudence examination for physical therapy assistants after obtaining Board approval.

## **8206 CONTINUING EDUCATION REQUIREMENTS**

8206.1 Subject to § 8206.2, this section shall apply to applicants for the renewal, reactivation, or reinstatement of a license expiring January 31, 2011, and for subsequent terms.

8206.2 This section shall not apply to applicants for an initial license by examination or endorsement, nor shall it apply to applicants for the first renewal of a license granted by examination.

8206.3 A continuing education credit shall be valid only if it is part of a program or activity approved by the Board in accordance with § 8207.

8206.4 An applicant for renewal of a license shall submit proof pursuant to § 8206.7 of having completed three (3) continuing education units or thirty (30) hours of approved continuing education credit during the two (2) year period preceding the date the license expires.

- 8206.5 Beginning with the licensure period ending January 31, 2015, not more than one-half (1/2) of the total required number of Continuing Education Units (CEUs) may be accepted in any renewal period, or for reinstatement or reactivation of a license, for approved online courses, home study courses, video courses, telecourses, videoconferences, and teleconference activities.
- 8206.6 To qualify for a license, a person in inactive status within the meaning of section 511 of the Act (D.C. Official Code § 3-1205.11) who submits an application to reactivate a license shall submit proof of having completed fifteen (15) hours of approved continuing education credit within one (1) year prior to application for each license year after January 31, 2011, that the applicant was in inactive status.
- 8206.7 To qualify for a license, an applicant for reinstatement of a license shall submit proof of having completed fifteen (15) hours of approved continuing education credit for each year after January 31, 2011, that the applicant was not licensed.
- 8206.8 An applicant under this section shall prove completion of required continuing education credits by submitting with the application the following information with respect to each program:
- (a) The name and address of the sponsor of the program;
  - (b) The name of the program, its location, a description of the subject matter covered, and the names of the instructors;
  - (c) The dates on which the applicant attended the program;
  - (d) The hours of credit claimed; and
  - (e) Verification by the sponsor of completion, by signature or stamp.
- 8206.9 If an applicant for renewal of a license fails to submit proof of having completed continuing education requirements by the date the license expires, the applicant shall not practice until his or her license has been renewed.
- 8206.10 An applicant for renewal of a license who fails to submit proof of having completed continuing education requirements by the date the license expires may renew the license up to sixty (60) days after the expiration by submitting proof pursuant to § 8206.7 and paying the late fee.
- 8206.11 If an applicant for renewal of a license fails to submit proof of completion of continuing education requirements or pay the late fee within sixty (60) days after the expiration of the applicant's license, the license shall be considered to have lapsed and the applicant shall be required to apply for reinstatement pursuant to section 512 of the Act (D.C. Official Code § 3-1205.12).

8206.12 The Board may, in its discretion, grant an extension of the sixty (60) day period to renew after expiration if the applicant's failure to submit proof of completion was for good cause. As used in this section, "good cause" includes the following:

- (a) Serious and protracted illness of the applicant; and
- (b) The death or serious and protracted illness of a member of the applicant's immediate family.

8206.13 The Board may conduct an audit of licensees to determine compliance with the continuing education requirements.

**8207 APPROVED CONTINUING EDUCATION PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES**

8207.1 The Board may, in its discretion, approve continuing education programs and activities that contribute to the growth of an applicant in professional competence while practicing as a physical therapy assistant and which meet the other requirements of this section.

8207.2 The Board may approve the following types of continuing education programs, if the program meets the requirements of § 8207.3:

- (a) An undergraduate or graduate course given at an accredited college or university;
- (b) A seminar or workshop;
- (c) An education program given at a conference;
- (d) In-service training (maximum ten (10) hours of credit);
- (e) Home study courses; and
- (f) Online courses.

8207.3 To qualify for approval by the Board, a continuing education program shall:

- (a) Be current in its subject matter;
- (b) Be developed and taught by qualified individuals; and
- (c) Meet one of the following requirements:
  - (1) Be administered or approved by a recognized national, state or local physical therapy organization; health care organization; accredited health care facility; or an accredited

college or university; or

- (2) Be submitted by the program sponsors or the applicant to the Board for review no less than sixty (60) days prior to the date of the presentation and be approved by the Board.

8207.4 The Board may issue and update a list of approved continuing education programs.

8207.5 An applicant shall have the burden of verifying whether a program is approved by the Board pursuant to this section prior to attending the program.

8207.6 The Board may approve the following continuing education activities by an applicant:

- (a) Service as an instructor or speaker at a conference, seminar, workshop, or in-service training;
- (b) Publication of an article in a professional journal or publication of a book or a chapter in a book or publication of a book review in a professional journal or bulletin; and
- (c) Participation in research as a principal investigator or research assistant.

**8208 CONTINUING EDUCATION CREDITS**

8208.1 The Board may grant continuing education credit for whole hours only, with a minimum of fifty (50) minutes constituting one (1) credit hour.

8208.2 For approved undergraduate or graduate courses, each semester hour of credit shall constitute fifteen (15) hours of continuing education credit, and each quarter hour of credit constitutes ten (10) hours of continuing education credit.

8208.3 The Board may grant a maximum of ten (10) continuing education credits per year to an applicant who attends in-service education programs.

8208.4 The Board may grant an applicant who serves as an instructor or speaker at an acceptable program for both preparation and presentation time, subject to the restrictions set forth in §§ 8208.5 through 8208.8.

8208.5 The maximum amount of credit that may be granted for preparation time is twice the amount of the associated presentation time.

8208.6 The maximum amount of credit that may be granted pursuant to § 8208.4 is fifty percent (50%) of an applicant's continuing education requirement.



- 8208.7 If an applicant has previously received credit in connection with a particular presentation, the Board shall not grant credit for a subsequent presentation unless it involves either a different subject or substantial additional research concerning the same subject.
- 8208.8 The presentation shall have been completed during the period for which credit is claimed.
- 8208.9 The Board may grant an applicant who is an author or editor of a published book four (4) units or forty (40) hours of continuing education credit, if the book has been published or accepted for publication during the period for which credit is claimed and the applicant submits proof of this fact in the application.
- 8208.10 The Board may grant an applicant who is the sole author or co-author of a published original paper, journal article or poster presentation, two (2) units or twenty (20) hours of credit, subject to the same restrictions set forth for books in § 8208.9.
- 8208.11 The Board may grant an applicant who is the sole author of a published book review, review paper, or abstract one (1) unit or ten (10) hours of continuing education credit, subject to the same restrictions set forth for books in §8208.9.

## **8209           LAWFUL PRACTICE**

- 8209.1 A physical therapy assistant may perform physical therapy functions only in accordance with this section.
- 8209.2 A physical therapy assistant may perform the following functions under the direct supervision of a physical therapist:
- (a) Use of therapeutic exercise, mechanical traction, therapeutic massage, compression, heat, cold, ultraviolet, water, and electricity;
  - (b) Measurement and adjustment of crutches, canes, walkers, and wheelchairs, and instruction in their use and care;
  - (c) Instruction, motivation, and assistance to patients and others in improving pulmonary function, learning, and functional activities such as pre-ambulation, transfer, ambulation and daily living activities, and the use and care of orthoses, prostheses, and supportive devices;
  - (d) Modification of treatment procedures as indicated by patient response and within the limits specified in the plan of care, and reported orally or in writing to the physical therapist; and
  - (e) Participation in routine administrative procedures required for a

physical therapist service.

- 8209.3 A physical therapy assistant may not perform the following:
- (a) Interpret referrals;
  - (b) Perform evaluation procedures;
  - (c) Initiate or adjust treatment programs; or
  - (d) Assume responsibility for planning patient care.
- 8209.4 A licensed physical therapist shall be fully responsible for any actions by a physical therapy assistant performing physical therapist functions while under the physical therapist's supervision.
- 8209.5 A licensed physical therapist shall perform the final evaluation for a patient who has been treated throughout the patient's history by a physical therapy assistant.
- 8209.6 A physical therapist shall provide direct supervision to no more than three (3) physical therapist subordinates at any one time.
- 8209.7 A physical therapist shall ensure the qualifications of all physical therapy assistants under his or her supervision.
- 8209.8 Before a patient is treated by a physical therapy assistant, a licensed physical therapist shall evaluate the patient and formulate initial and ongoing treatment goals and plans.
- 8209.9 Pursuant to § 8209.8, a licensed physical therapist shall reevaluate each patient being treated by a physical therapy assistant by the seventh (7<sup>th</sup>) visit and every seventh (7<sup>th</sup>) visit thereafter.
- 8209.10 Support personnel shall only perform routine assigned tasks under the direct supervision of a licensed physical therapist or a licensed physical therapy assistant, who shall only assign those tasks or activities that are nondiscretionary and do not require the exercise of profession judgment.
- 8209.11 A physical therapy assistant shall comply with the standards of ethical and professional conduct established by the recognized professional program which is approved by the Board, as they may be amended or republished from time to time.

## **8299 DEFINITIONS**

**8299.1** As used in this chapter, the following terms shall have the meanings ascribed:

**Applicant** – a person applying for a license to practice as a physical therapy assistant under this chapter.

**Board** – the Board of Physical Therapy, established by section 209 of the Act (D.C. Official Code § 2-1202.09).

**Continuing education unit** – a unit of measurement representing ten (10) hours of continuing education credit.

**Direct supervision** - the supervision in which a physical therapist is personally present and immediately available within the treatment area to give aid, direction, and instruction when physical therapy procedures or activities are performed.

**Physical therapist** – a person licensed to practice physical therapy under the Act.

**Physical therapy assistant** – a physical therapy assistant who is a person licensed to practice under the Act.

**Practice of physical therapy** – "Practice of physical therapy" means the independent evaluation of human disability, injury, or disease by means of noninvasive tests of neuromuscular functions and other standard procedures of physical therapy, and the treatment of human disability, injury, or disease by therapeutic procedures, embracing the specific scientific application of physical measures to secure the functional rehabilitation of the human body. These measures include the use of therapeutic exercise, therapeutic massage, heat or cold, air, light, water, electricity, or sound for the purpose of correcting or alleviating any physical or mental disability, or preventing the development of any physical or mental disability, or the performance of noninvasive tests of neuromuscular functions as an aid to the detection or treatment of any human condition.

8299.2 The definitions in § 4099 of chapter 40 of this title are incorporated by reference into and are applicable to this chapter.