

# **Michigan Physical Therapy Association**

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## **WHAT IS THE SCOPE OF PRACTICE OF PHYSICAL THERAPY?**

Physical Therapy is a health care profession that examines, identifies, educates and provides treatment for an individual's impairments, dysfunctions, disorders and disabilities of the musculoskeletal, neuromuscular, and cardiopulmonary systems. In addition, physical therapists consult with other members of the health care team.

These impairments, dysfunctions, disorders and disabilities result from congenital, genetic, disease, or trauma related conditions.

The physical therapist (PT) examines a person's ability to move as it relates to underlying problems with bones, joints, cartilage, ligaments, fascia, muscle, skin, nerves, etc. The data that is collected during this examination and a patient interview helps physical therapists to know why, how, when, and what to treat systematically.

Contemporary health care requires a multi-disciplinary approach for quality care.

In 48 states, contemporary Physical Therapy practice includes patient evaluation, education and consultation without a physician referral. In 46 + DC of those same states, physical therapists (PTs) may also render treatment without a physician referral.

Physical therapist assistants (PTAs) assist physical therapists (PTs) in the delivery of physical therapy services under the delegation and supervision of physical therapists (PTs).

## **WHAT ARE THE EDUCATIONAL AND LICENSURE REQUIREMENTS FOR PT?**

### **All PT Education Programs in Michigan currently offer a Doctoral degree for entry into Physical Therapy,**

Today nearly all PT education programs in the United States offer a Doctoral degree (DPT). Over the years, all licensed physical therapists (PTs) – whether receiving the doctoral, master's or bachelor's degree have been educated to identify the nature or cause of the problem to be treated, to identify problems that are outside the scope of physical therapy practice and to refer the patient to a physician. After graduation, all physical therapists (PTs) must pass the National Physical Therapist Exam to become licensed. While the scope of practice varies between some states, all physical therapists are educated to be able to practice in every state, including practice without physician referral.

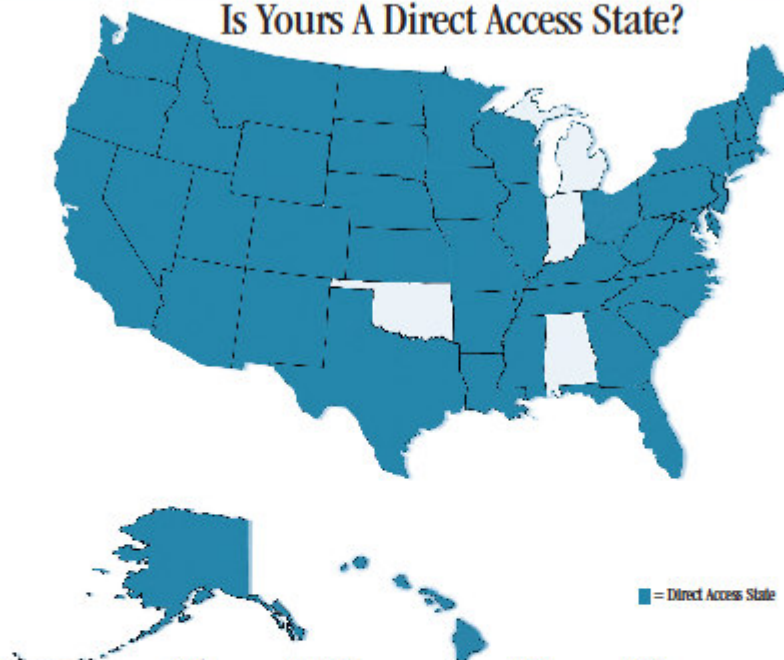
PTAs are trained at an Associate's degree level at a nationally accredited Physical Therapist Assistant education program. Forty-nine states currently regulate the practice of a PTA.

## **PHYSICAL THERAPY IS NOT A GENERIC TERM OR LABEL FOR USE BY OTHER HEALTH CARE PRACTITIONERS FOR SERVICES THEY PROVIDE**

Certain procedures and measures (use of ultrasound, electrical stimulation, heat, cold, exercise, etc.) utilized by Physical Therapists (Physiotherapist) are held in common with other professions (Athletic Trainers, Occupational Therapists, Chiropractic, Medicine, etc.). However the manner and philosophy of intervention strategies in the use of these procedures and measures is unique to each profession. As such, for a procedure to be called Physical Therapy or Physiotherapy it must be provided within the philosophical and ethical contexts of the PT profession. These contexts are only provided by a professional Physical Therapist (physiotherapist) or through services directly supervised by a professional Physical Therapist (Physiotherapist). When any of the "in common" measures or procedures is utilized by other professions they should be identified as being part of that profession and practice. To call it Physical Therapy or Physiotherapy under such circumstances would be misrepresentation to the client being served and would be inappropriate.

# Direct Access to Physical Therapist Services

Is Yours A Direct Access State?



Alaska	1986	Louisiana	2005	Ohio	2004
Arizona	1985	Maine	1991	Oregon	1995
Arkansas	1997	Maryland	1979	Pennsylvania	2002
California	1968	Massachusetts	1982	Rhode Island	1992
Colorado	1988	Minnesota	1988	South Carolina	1998
Connecticut	2006	Mississippi	2006	South Dakota	1986
Delaware	1995	Missouri	1999	Tennessee	1999
District of Columbia	2007	Montana	1987	Texas	1991
Florida	1992	Nebraska	1957	Utah	1985
Georgia	2006	Nevada	1985	Vermont	1988
Hawaii	2010	New Hampshire	1988	Virginia	2001
Idaho	1987	New Jersey	2005	Washington	1988
Illinois	1988	New Mexico	1989	West Virginia	1984
Iowa	1988	New York	2006	Wisconsin	1989
Kansas	2007	North Carolina	1985	Wyoming	2005
Kentucky	1987	North Dakota	1989		

Total=46 + DC

Your Constituents Deserve It.