

Thank you for your email to the Pennsylvania State Board of Physical Therapy. As the Board's legal counsel, I have been asked to respond.

In general, a licensed physical therapist may practice the full range of physical therapy, as defined in the Pennsylvania Physical Therapy Practice Act. Act 38 of 2008 significantly amended the PTPA. Section 2 of the PTPA now defines the term "physical therapy" as any of the following: (1) The evaluation, examination and testing of individuals with mechanical, physiological and developmental impairments, functional limitations and disabilities, other health-related or movement-related conditions, performed to determine a diagnosis, prognosis and plan of treatment intervention with the scope of this act or to assess the ongoing effects of intervention. (2) The performance of tests and measurements as an aid in diagnosis or evaluation of function and the treatment of the individual through the utilization of the effective properties of physical measures such as mechanical stimulation, heat, cold, light, air, water, electricity, sound, massage, mobilization/manual therapy. (3) The use of therapeutic exercises and rehabilitative procedures including training in functional activities, with or without the utilization of assistive devices, for the purpose of limiting or preventing disability and alleviating or correcting any physical or mental condition. (4) Reducing the risk of injury, impairment, functional limitation and disability, including the promotion and maintenance of fitness, health and wellness in populations of all ages as well as engaging in administration, consultation, education and research." Section 2 of the PTPA also defines mobilization/manual therapy as "a group of techniques comprising a continuum of skilled passive movements to the joints and/or related soft tissues through the normal physiological range of motion that are applied at varying speeds and amplitudes, without limitation."

Because the Board does not have the statutory authority to issue an advisory opinion, I, as the Board's legal counsel, cannot preapprove a particular course of conduct.

Historically, only those licensed physical therapists holding a certificate of authority to treat a patient for up to 30 days without a physician referral have been required to complete continuing education. Under the current regulations at 49 Pa. Code § 40.63(d)(2), to be eligible for credit, a course of continuing education must be within the scope of practice of physical therapy and cannot be unrelated to the actual practice of physical therapy, such as office management or practice building. Act 38 amended section 9(c)(1) of the PTPA to prohibit credit for continuing education in office management or practice building and to increase the required amount of continuing education from 20 to 30 hours during each biennial renewal period. Act 38 also added section 7.2 of the PTPA to require all licensed physical therapists to complete at least 30 hours of continuing education during each biennial renewal period, but credit may not be awarded for courses in office management or practice building. The general requirement for CE will not go into effect until the Board promulgates regulations. Under 49 Pa. Code § 40.63(d)(1), the course sponsor must apply to the Board for course approval so that licensees who attend the course may receive credit.

If you have any other questions, please contact me.

Sincerely,

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