

Physical Therapy ADVISOR

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Oklahoma Allied Professional Peer Assistance Program

The Oklahoma State Legislature established the Oklahoma Allied Professional Peer Assistance Program (APPA) to aid allied health professionals licensed by the Oklahoma State Board of Medical Licensure and Supervision (Board) whose competency may be compromised due to alcohol or other substance abuse. Based on the Board's highly successful Physicians Health Program, APPA seeks to identify, treat and rehabilitate allied medical professionals so these valuable members of the Oklahoma health care community can return and/or continue in their practices.

All program information is completely confidential for all health professionals who enroll and remain in the program. Records are maintained in a place separate and apart from the Board's records. All program participants must sign a contract that ensures they will comply with the treatment plan and be responsible for any costs. The program emphasizes intensive outpatient treatment whenever possible, counseling, AA/NA meetings and random drug screens.

A program participant will be reported to the Board only for failure to comply with contract/treatment plan or when deemed unsafe to practice.

Billy Stout, MD, is APPA Program Director.

Referrals to the APPA Program

(405) 962-1450
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CE Course Approval Application Tips

Robert A. Eskew, PT, MS, PCS, a member of the PT Committee, reminds all PTs and PTAs that it is important to submit forms for continuing education course approval that are complete and contain all the critical information necessary for the committee to make its decision.

Here are some basic needs:

- **Course Objectives** must be clearly stated in terms that demonstrate their relevance to the practice of physical therapy.
- **Course Instructors** must be identified by name and credentials with a brief biography regarding their expertise in the proposed topic. (For example: Mary Jones, DPT, OCS, Fellow AAOMPT, Clinical Faculty in orthopedic physical therapy Pacific University, Portland, OR.)
- **Time of Instruction** needs to be clearly and precisely delineated. (For example: An eight hour program that includes two 15-minute breaks and a 30-minute lunch break will receive approval for seven contact hours. If the same program included a one hour lunch and two 15-minute breaks, 6.5 contact hours should be requested.)
- **Atypical Courses** must demonstrate and justify relevance to physical therapy before the committee can grant approval. (For example: "Advances in Water Sports" in and of itself does not seem to pertain to physical therapy. However, credit can be approved if the applicant explains the course covers adaptations for persons with disabilities to participate in water sports and specific information for therapists regarding client selection and adaptations for a variety of impairments.)

The Committee works diligently to approve CE courses. The proper submission of course applications will greatly streamline the process. Course approval applications are available by clicking Physical Therapy on the Medical Board's website (okmedical-board.org).

PT CEU Requirements

To renew their licenses, Oklahoma PTs and PTAs must indicate by signing a statement that they have met state mandated Continuing Education requirements.

PTs must earn forty approved contact hours and PTAs thirty approved contact hours of Continuing Education credits within the preceding two-year period. At least half of the required hours must be Category A units. In addition, at least three of the hours for both PTs and PTAs must contain ethics education that includes American Physical Therapy Association (APTA) Guidelines for Ethical Conduct and the APTA Code of Ethics. The ethics hours can be either Category A or B.

Category A

Category A units include:

- **Synchronous Educational Programs** require attendance at real-time courses with interaction between course instructor and participants and with opportunity for immediate feedback.
- **Program Presentations** are original continuing education programs presented by a licensee and targeted toward peers and other health care professionals (allowed once per compliance period.)
- **Post Graduate Studies** can be awarded up to 16 contact hours for each college credit hour successful completed.

Category B

Category B credits include:

- **Publications** - writing for professional publications including books, papers, case studies, book reviews, etc. Acceptance for publication must occur within the compli-

ance period. Book reviews may receive up to 10 contact hours and other published works up to 15 contact hours. The Physical Therapy Committee will determine the number of contact hours awarded.

- **Study Groups** - synchronous or asynchronous meetings of intense study of a topic related to physical therapy. Groups must consist of at least four participants with a minimum of four hours of required participation. The Committee must approve all such meetings and designate contact hours after groups submit course outlines including topics, references, printed material, time and place of meeting, number of credit hours sought, and any other pertinent information.
- **Independent Instruction** - home study or internet courses relating to physical therapy practice beyond basic preparation for licensure. For credit to be awarded, proof of a passing score on a post test and certificate of completion must be submitted.

Category C

Category C credits include:

- **Federation of State Boards of Physical Therapy's Practice Review Tool** - actual number of contact hours granted will be determined by the PT Committee. Pre-approval is required for credit consideration.

PTs and PTAs are responsible for maintaining proof of their continuing education activities. The Physical Therapy Committee will conduct random audits of licensees' continuing education units. There are no excuses for a licensee's failure to maintain continuing education records.

PT Code of Ethics

Oklahoma Physical Therapists (PT) and Physical Therapist Assistants (PTA) must earn at least three hours of Continuing Education credit in ethics every two years based on the American Physical Therapy Association (APTA) Code of Ethics and APTA Guide for Professional Conduct.

The PT and PTA Code(s) of Ethics and Guides for Professional Conduct are very similar, with the main difference being the recognition of the supervisory relationship between the two disciplines. Both Codes and Guides are available on the APTA website (apta.org).

Peggy Newman, PT, MHR, Assistant Professor, Director of Clinical Education and Director of Continuing Education, at the University of Oklahoma Health Sciences Center, noted that in her experience silence about inappropriate behavior by colleagues or employees, billing and up-coding, and patient abandonment are among some of the most prevalent issues that may lead to ethical dilemmas for PTs and PTAs.

Provisions under Principle #5 stipulate that PTs “shall encourage colleagues with physical, psychological, or substance-related impairments that may adversely impact their professional responsibilities to seek assistance or counsel.” PTs “who have knowledge that a colleague is unable to perform their professional responsibilities with reasonable skill and safety shall report this information to the

appropriate authority.”

The APTA Guide to Professional Conduct discusses the difficulty in making these two distinct determinations.

The Oklahoma Allied Professional Peer Assistance Program (see story on front page) can assist PTs in making these decisions.

The fulfillment of professional and legal obligations also means that PTs “shall provide notice and information about alternatives for obtaining care in the event the PT terminates the provider relationship while the patient/client continues to need physical therapy services.

Provisions of Principle #7 address billing issues. PTs “shall seek remuneration as is deserved and reasonable for physical therapy services; shall not accept gifts or other considerations that influence or give the appearance of influencing their professional judgment; shall fully disclose any financial interest in products or services they recommend to patients/clients; and shall be aware of charges and shall ensure that documentation and coding for physical therapy services accurately reflect the nature and extent of the services provided.”

For a complete copy of APTA’s ethics documents, go to their website at <http://www.apta.org/ethics>. If you have questions about an issue that you feel may be a violation of the Physical Therapy Practice Act, contact the Medical Board offices at (405) 962-1400.

The PT code has eight Principles:

- Respect the inherent dignity and rights of all individuals.
- Be trustworthy and compassionate in addressing the rights and needs of patients/clients.
- Be accountable for making sound professional judgments.
- Demonstrate integrity in relationships with patients/clients, families, colleagues, students, research participants, other health care providers, employers, payers and the public.
- Fulfill legal and professional obligations.
- Enhance expertise through lifelong acquisition and refinement of knowledge, skills, abilities, and professional behaviors.
- Promote organizational behaviors and business practices that benefit patients/clients and society.
- Participate in efforts to meet the health needs of people locally, nationally and globally.

Tulsa Named to Physical Therapy Committee

Tami Spocogee is the newest member of the Oklahoma State Board of Medical Licensure and Supervision Physical Therapy Committee. Ms. Spocogee is the public member of the Committee. Under Oklahoma law, neither the public member of the Committee nor any family member can be affiliated with the provision or delivery of health care.

A resident of Tulsa, Ms. Spocogee has over thirty (30) years of experience in the field of telecommunications and is an active community service volunteer. She is currently president of Quota International of Tulsa, an organization dedicated to the support of the deaf and hard of hearing and disadvantaged women and children.

Other members of the Committee are Nancy Davis, PTA, Chairwoman, Staci Fruediger, PT, Carolyn Craven, PT and Robert Eskew, PT. Members are appointed by the Board of Medical Licensure and Supervision for three-year terms.

Referrals

PTs may accept referrals from any licensed physician/surgeon or his/her Physician Assistant. Referrals also may be accepted from licensed dentists, chiropractors and podiatrists, with those referrals being limited to the licensed professional's respective area of training and practice. The licensed professional does not have to be licensed in Oklahoma to give a referral but it is the PTs responsibility to insure the professional holds a valid license. [Title 59 O.S. § 887.17 (A)(1)]

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