

Connecticut General Statutes
Chapter 376
Physical Therapists

Sec. 20-66. Definitions. As used in this chapter, unless the context otherwise requires:

- (1) "Physical therapist" means a person licensed to practice physical therapy in this state;
- (2) "Physical therapy" means the evaluation and treatment of any person by the employment of the effective properties of physical measures, the performance of tests and measurements as an aid to evaluation of function and the use of therapeutic exercises and rehabilitative procedures, with or without assistive devices, for the purpose of preventing, correcting or alleviating a physical or mental disability. "Physical therapy" includes the establishment and modification of physical therapy programs, treatment planning, instruction, wellness care, peer review, [and] consultative services and the use of low-level light laser therapy for the purpose of accelerating tissue repair, decreasing edema or minimizing or eliminating pain, but does not include surgery, the prescribing of drugs, the development of a medical diagnosis of disease, injury or illness, the use of cauterization or the use of Roentgen rays or radium for diagnostic or therapeutic purposes. As used in this section, "low-level light laser therapy" means low-level light therapy having wave lengths that range from six hundred to one thousand nanometers.
- (3) "Physical therapist assistant" means a person licensed to assist in the practice of physical therapy in this state under the supervision of a physical therapist. For purposes of this subdivision and subdivision (2) of subsection (a) of section 20-73, "supervision" means the overseeing of or the participation in the work of a physical therapist assistant by a licensed physical therapist, including, but not limited to: (A) Continuous availability of direct communication between the physical therapist assistant and a licensed physical therapist; (B) availability of a licensed physical therapist on a regularly scheduled basis to (i) review the practice of the physical therapist assistant, and (ii) support the physical therapist assistant in the performance of the physical therapist assistant's services; and (C) a predetermined plan for emergency situations, including the designation of an alternate licensed physical therapist in the absence of the regular licensed physical therapist;
- (4) "Assist in the practice of physical therapy" means the treatment of any person by the employment of the effective properties of physical measures and the use of therapeutic exercises and rehabilitative procedures, with or without assistive devices, for the purpose of preventing, correcting or alleviating a physical or mental disability, but does not include the interpretation of referrals, initial or discharge evaluation or assessment, or determination or modification of treatment or discharge plans; and
- (5) "Wellness care" means services related to conditioning, strength training, fitness, workplace ergonomics or injury prevention.

Sec. 20-67. Board of Examiners for Physical Therapists. The Connecticut State Board of Examiners for Physical Therapists shall consist of one physician, two physical therapists and two public members, appointed by the Governor, subject to the provisions of section 4-9a. The Governor may appoint the physical therapist members of said board from a list of two names submitted by the Connecticut chapter of the American Physical Therapy Association and may appoint the physician member from a name submitted by the Connecticut State Medical Society. Vacancies in said board shall be filled by the Governor for the unexpired portion of the term. All appointments shall be subject to the provisions of section 4-10. No member shall serve more than two consecutive full terms, commencing on and after July 1, 1981.

Sec. 20-68. Meetings. Powers and duties of board, its members and Department of Public Health. The Board of Examiners for Physical Therapists shall meet at least once during each calendar quarter and at such other times as the chairman deems necessary at a time and place to be designated by the board. The Department of Public Health shall administer the provisions of this chapter. The Commissioner of Public Health, with advice and assistance from the board, may adopt bylaws and regulations for the transaction of the business of the board and the management of its affairs and for the conduct of examinations. Three members of said board shall constitute a quorum and special meetings shall be called upon the request of any three members. The board shall keep a record of its proceedings under this chapter and of all persons licensed under the provisions of section 20-70 or 20-71. On request of said

board, the Commissioner of Public Works shall provide a suitable room for its meetings. The place and time of examination shall be at the discretion of the department and held annually or more often as, in the discretion of the department, the need requires. Said board shall keep a list of all physical therapy schools which are approved by it, with the consent of the Commissioner of Public Health, as maintaining the standard for education in physical therapy as established by said board, with the consent of the Commissioner of Public Health. Members shall not be compensated for their services. Any member who fails to attend three consecutive meetings or who fails to attend fifty per cent of all meetings held during any calendar year shall be deemed to have resigned from office. Minutes of all meetings shall be recorded by the board. No member shall participate in the affairs of the board during the pendency of any disciplinary proceedings by the board against such member. No professional member shall be an elected or appointed officer of a professional society of physical therapists or have been such an officer during the year immediately preceding his appointment. Said board shall (1) hear and decide matters concerning revocation or suspension of licensure, (2) adjudicate complaints against practitioners and (3) impose sanctions where appropriate.

Sec. 20-70. Qualifications for examination for licensure. Practice pending examination results. Reexamination. (a)(1) Any person who is a graduate of a school of physical therapy approved by the Board of Examiners for Physical Therapists, with the consent of the Commissioner of Public Health, or has successfully completed requirements for graduation from such school, shall be eligible for examination for licensure as a physical therapist upon the payment of a fee of two hundred eighty-five dollars. The Department of Public Health, with the consent of the board, shall determine the subject matter of such examination, which shall be designed to show proficiency in physical therapy and related subjects, and shall determine whether such examination shall be written, oral or practical, or a combination thereof. Passing scores shall be established by the department with the consent of the board. Warning of such examination shall be given by the department not less than two weeks in advance of the date set for the examination. If the applicant passes such examination, the department shall issue to such applicant a license to practice physical therapy.

(2) Any person who is a graduate of a physical therapy or physical therapy assistant program accredited by the Commission on Accreditation in Physical Therapy shall be eligible for examination for licensure as a physical therapist assistant upon the payment of a fee of one hundred ninety dollars. The department, with the consent of the board, shall determine the subject matter of such examination, which shall be designed to show proficiency in physical therapy and related subjects, and shall determine whether such examination shall be written, oral or practical, or a combination thereof. Passing scores shall be established by the department with the consent of the board. Warning of such examination shall be given by the department not less than two weeks in advance of the date set for the examination. If the applicant passes such examination, the department shall issue to such applicant a physical therapist assistant license. Any applicant for examination for licensure as a physical therapy assistant whose application is based on a diploma issued to such applicant by a foreign physical therapy school shall furnish documentary evidence, satisfactory to the department, that the requirements for graduation are similar to or higher than those required of graduates of approved United States schools of physical therapy.

(b) (1) Any person who is a graduate of an approved United States physical therapy school and who has filed an application with the department may practice as a physical therapist under the direct and immediate supervision of a licensed physical therapist in this state for a period not to exceed one hundred twenty calendar days after the date of application. If the person practicing pursuant to this subdivision fails to pass the licensure examination, all privileges under this subdivision shall automatically cease.

(2) Any person who is a graduate of an approved United States physical therapist assistant school or an approved physical therapy school and who has filed an application with the department may practice as a physical therapist assistant under the direct and immediate supervision of a licensed physical therapist in this state for a period not to exceed one hundred twenty calendar days after the date of application. If the person practicing pursuant to this subdivision fails to pass the licensure examination, all privileges under this subdivision shall automatically cease.

(c) Any applicant under this section who fails to pass the examination prescribed by the department with the consent of the board may take a subsequent examination on payment of an additional application fee.

Sec. 20-70a. Practice pending examination results for graduates of foreign physical therapy schools. Any applicant for examination for licensure as a physical therapist whose application is based on a diploma issued to the applicant by a foreign physical therapy school shall furnish documentary evidence, satisfactory to the department that the requirements for graduation are similar to or higher than those required of graduates of approved United States schools of therapy. Any applicant under this section whose application has been filed and approved by said department may practice as a physical therapist under the continuous direction and immediate supervision of a physical therapist licensed to practice in this state, in a licensed health care facility, for a period not to exceed one hundred twenty calendar days after the date of application, provided this privilege shall automatically cease on failure of an applicant to pass the examination.

Sec. 20-71. Licensure without examination. Physical therapists and physical therapy assistants. (a) The Department of Public Health may issue a license to practice physical therapy without examination, on payment of a fee of two hundred eighty-five dollars, to an applicant who is a physical therapist registered or licensed under the laws of any other state or territory of the United States, any province of Canada or any other country, if the requirements for registration or licensure of physical therapists in such state, territory, province or country are deemed by the department to be equivalent to, or higher than those prescribed in this chapter.

(b) The department may issue a physical therapist assistant license without examination, on payment of a fee of one hundred ninety dollars, to an applicant who is a physical therapist assistant registered or licensed under the laws of any other state or territory of the United States, any province of Canada or any other country, if the requirements for registration or licensure of physical therapist assistants in such state, territory, province or country are deemed by the department to be equivalent to, or higher than those prescribed in this chapter.

(c) Notwithstanding the provisions of section 20-70, prior to April 30, 2007, the commissioner may issue a physical therapist assistant license to any applicant who presents evidence satisfactory to the commissioner of having completed twenty years of employment as a physical therapist assistant prior to October 1, 1989, on payment of a fee of one hundred ninety dollars.

(d) Notwithstanding the provisions of section 20-70, the commissioner may issue a physical therapist assistant license to any applicant who presents evidence satisfactory to the commissioner of having registered as a physical therapist assistant with the Department of Public Health on or before April 1, 2006, on payment of a fee of one hundred ninety dollars.

Sec. 20-72. List of registrants. Section 20-72 is repealed.

Sec. 20-73. Licensure required for practice and use of title. Practice regulated. Fraud in obtaining licensure. Revocation of license. (a)(1) No person may practice as a physical therapist unless licensed pursuant to this chapter. No person may use the term "Registered Physical Therapist", "Licensed Physical Therapist" or "Physical Therapist" or the letters "R.P.T.", "L.P.T." or any other letters, words or insignia indicating or implying licensure as a physical therapist in this state unless the person is so licensed.

(2) No person may practice as a physical therapist assistant unless such person is licensed pursuant to this chapter and is under the supervision of a physical therapist licensed pursuant to this chapter. No person may use the term "Registered Physical Therapist Assistant", "Licensed Physical Therapist Assistant" or "Physical Therapist Assistant", or the letters "P.T.A." to represent or imply the term "Physical Therapist Assistant", or any other letters, words or insignia indicating or implying licensure as a physical therapist assistant in this state unless the person is so licensed.

(b) (1) The treatment of human ailments by physical therapy shall only be performed by a person licensed under the provisions of this chapter as a physical therapist or physical therapist assistant. Except as otherwise provided in subdivisions (2) and (3) of this subsection, such treatment may be performed by a licensed physical therapist without an oral or written referral by a person licensed in this state to practice medicine and surgery, podiatry, natureopathy, chiropractic or dentistry, or an advanced practice registered nurse licensed to prescribe in accordance with section 20-94a or a physician assistant licensed to prescribe in accordance with section 20-12d, provided the licensed physical therapist (A) was admitted to a bachelor's degree program prior to January 1, 1998, and has practiced physical therapy for at least

four out of the most recent six years of his or her clinical practice, or earned a master's degree or higher in physical therapy from an accredited institution of higher education, (B) requires any person receiving such treatment to disclose or affirmatively confirm the identity of such person's primary care provider or health care provider of record upon each initial visit for treatment without an oral or written referral, (C) provides information to any person seeking such treatment regarding the need to consult with such person's primary care provider or health care provider of record regarding such person's underlying medical condition if the condition is prolonged, does not improve within a thirty-day period, or continues to require ongoing continuous treatment, and (D) refers any person receiving such treatment to an appropriate licensed practitioner of the healing arts if, upon examination or reexamination, the same condition for which the person sought physical therapy does not demonstrate objective, measurable, functional improvement in a period of thirty consecutive days or at the end of six visits, whichever is earlier.

(2) In any case in which a person seeking such treatment requires a Grade V spinal manipulation, such treatment shall only be performed (A) upon the oral or written referral of a person licensed in this state, or in a state having licensing requirements meeting the approval of the appropriate examining board in this state, to practice medicine and surgery, podiatry, natureopathy, chiropractic or dentistry, or an advanced practice registered nurse licensed to prescribe in accordance with section 20-94a or a physician assistant licensed to prescribe in accordance with section 20-12d, and (B) by a licensed physical therapist who (i) was admitted to a bachelor's degree program prior to January 1, 1998, and has practiced physical therapy for at least four out of the most recent six years of his or her clinical practice, or earned a master's degree or higher in physical therapy from an accredited institution of higher education, and (ii) holds a specialist certification in orthopedic physical therapy from the American Physical Therapy Association, or proof of completion of forty hours of course work in manual therapy, including Grade V spinal manipulation. Nothing in this section shall prevent a physical therapist from providing wellness care within the scope of physical therapy practice to asymptomatic persons without a referral. Nothing in this section shall require an employer or insurer to pay for such wellness care.

(3) In any case involving an injury, as described in section 31-275, such treatment shall only be performed upon the oral or written referral of a person licensed in this state or in a state having licensing requirements meeting the standards set by the Department of Public Health and the appropriate examining board in this state to practice medicine and surgery, podiatry, natureopathy, chiropractic or dentistry, or an advanced practice registered nurse licensed to prescribe in accordance with section 20-94a or a physician assistant licensed to prescribe in accordance with section 20-12d.

(c) Any person who violates the provisions of this section or who obtains or attempts to obtain licensure as a physical therapist or physical therapist assistant by any wilful misrepresentation or any fraudulent representation shall be fined not more than five hundred dollars or imprisoned not more than five years, or both. A physical therapist, physical therapist assistant or dentist who violates the provisions of this section shall be subject to licensure revocation in the same manner as is provided under section 19a-17, or in the case of a healing arts practitioner, section 20-45. For purposes of this section each instance of patient contact or consultation in violation of any provision of this section shall constitute a separate offense. Failure to renew a license in a timely manner shall not constitute a violation for the purposes of this section.

(d) Nothing in this section shall prohibit or limit the ability of a person licensed or certified in a field other than physical therapy from providing wellness care that is within the scope of such person's practice.

Sec. 20-73a. Charges against licensee, verification, hearing. Grounds for disciplinary action. Appeal. (a) The Board of Examiners for Physical Therapists shall have jurisdiction to hear all charges of conduct that fails to conform to the accepted standards of the practice of physical therapy brought against any person licensed as a physical therapist or physical therapist assistant and, after holding a hearing, written notice of which shall be given to the person complained of, the board, if it finds such person to be guilty, may revoke or suspend such person's license or take any of the actions set forth in section 19a-17 of the 2008 supplement to the general statutes. Any proceedings relative to such action may be begun by the filing of written charges with the Commissioner of Public Health. The causes for which such action may be taken are as follows: (1) Conviction in a court of competent jurisdiction, either within or without this state, of any crime in the practice of such person's profession; (2) illegal, incompetent or negligent conduct in the practice of physical therapy or in the supervision of a physical therapist assistant; (3) aiding or abetting

the unlawful practice of physical therapy; (4) treating human ailments by physical therapy without the oral or written referral by a person licensed in this state or in a state having licensing requirements meeting the approval of the appropriate examining board in this state to practice medicine and surgery, podiatry, natureopathy, chiropractic or dentistry if such referral is required pursuant to section 20-73; (5) failure to register with the Department of Public Health as required by law; (6) fraud or deception in obtaining a license; (7) engaging in fraud or material deception in the course of professional services or activities; (8) failure to comply with the continuing education requirements of section 20-73b of the 2008 supplement to the general statutes; (9) violation of any provision of this chapter, or any regulation adopted under this chapter; or failure to provide information to the Department of Public Health required to complete a health care provider profile, as set forth in section 20-13j, as amended by public act 08-109.

(b) The clerk of any court in this state in which a person practicing physical therapy has been convicted of any crime as described in this section shall, immediately after such conviction, transmit a certified copy, in duplicate, of the information and judgment, without charge, to the Department of Public Health, containing the name and address of the physical therapist or physical therapist assistant, the crime of which the physical therapist or physical therapist assistant has been convicted and the date of conviction. The hearing on such charges shall be conducted in accordance with the regulations adopted by the Commissioner of Public Health in accordance with chapter 54. Any person aggrieved by a final decision of the board may appeal from the decision as provided in section 4-183. Such appeal shall have precedence over nonprivileged cases in respect to order of trial. The Attorney General shall act as attorney in the public interest in defending against such an appeal. The board may petition the superior court for the judicial district of Hartford to enforce any action taken pursuant to section 19a-17.

Sec. 20-73b. Continuing education requirements. Waivers and extensions. (a) Except as otherwise provided in this section, each physical therapist licensed pursuant to this chapter shall complete a minimum of twenty hours of continuing education during each registration period. For purposes of this section, registration period means the twelve-month period for which a license has been renewed in accordance with section 19a-88 and is current and valid. The continuing education shall be in areas related to the individual's practice.

(b) Each licensee shall obtain a certificate of completion from the provider of continuing education activities for all continuing education hours successfully completed. Each licensee shall maintain such written documentation for a minimum of three years following the license renewal date for which the activity satisfies continuing education requirements. Certificates of completion shall be submitted by the licensee to the Department of Public Health not later than forty-five days after a request by said department for such certificates. A licensee who fails to comply with the continuing education requirements may be subject to disciplinary action pursuant to section 20-73a.

(c) The continuing education requirements shall be waived for licensees applying for licensure renewal for the first time. The department may, for a licensee who has a medical disability or illness, grant a waiver of the continuing education requirements or may grant the licensee an extension of time in which to fulfill the requirements, provided the licensee submits to the Department of Public Health an application for waiver or extension of time on a form prescribed by said department, along with a certification by a licensed physician of the disability or illness and such other documentation as may be required by said department. The Department of Public Health may grant a waiver or extension for a period not to exceed one registration period, except that said department may grant additional waivers or extensions if the medical disability or illness upon which a waiver or extension is granted continues beyond the period of the waiver or extension and the licensee applies to said department for an additional waiver or extension.

Sec. 20-73c. Prohibited use of chiropractic terms. No physical therapist or physical therapist assistant licensed to practice under the provisions of this chapter may use the term "chiropractic adjustment" or "chiropractic manipulations" to indicate or imply the application of these techniques as part of the practice of physical therapy.

Sec. 20-73d. Professional liability insurance required. Reports from insurance companies. (a) Each person licensed to practice physical therapy under the provisions of this chapter who provides direct patient care services shall maintain professional liability insurance or other indemnity against liability for professional malpractice. The amount of insurance which each such person shall carry as insurance or indemnity against claims for injury or death for professional malpractice shall not be less than five hundred thousand

dollars for one person, per occurrence, with an aggregate of not less than one million five hundred thousand dollars.

(b) Each insurance company that issues professional liability insurance, as defined in subdivision (10) of subsection (b) of section 38a-393, shall on and after January 1, 2007, render to the Commissioner of Public Health a true record of the names and addresses, according to classification, of cancellations of and refusals to renew professional liability insurance policies and the reasons for such cancellations or refusals to renew said policies for the year ending on the thirty-first day of December next preceding.

Sec. 20-74. Construction. Administration by commissioner. (a) No provision of this chapter shall confer any authority to practice medicine or surgery, nor shall this chapter prohibit the incidental care of the sick by domestic servants or by persons principally employed as housekeepers or as athletic trainers, nor prohibit any person from the domestic administration of family remedies or the furnishing of assistance in the case of emergency. It shall not prohibit persons registered under the provisions of chapter 372, 373, 375 or 378 from administering care to patients, nor shall it prohibit the care of the sick with or without compensation or personal profit in connection with the practice of the religious tenets of any church by adherents thereof, provided such persons shall not otherwise engage in the practice of physical therapy or assist in the practice of physical therapy within the meaning of this chapter. It shall not prohibit students who are enrolled in schools or courses of physical therapy or physical therapist assistant programs approved by the Board of Examiners for Physical Therapists with the consent of the Commissioner of Public Health from performing such work as is incidental to their respective courses of study; nor shall it prohibit any physical therapist from another state from doing such therapist's work or other physical therapy activities as is incidental to the person's course of study when taking or giving a postgraduate course or other courses of study in this state approved by said board. Any physical therapist who is a graduate from a school approved by the board with the consent of the Department of Public Health but not licensed in this state may, with the approval of the department and upon obtaining a temporary certificate from the department, practice physical therapy in this state on a temporary basis for a period of six months, which period may be extended upon request at the discretion of the department, provided (1) such physical therapist does not claim to be licensed to practice in this state, and (2) application for licensure by examination, reciprocity or endorsement is filed with the department within six months after starting such practice. Persons in the service of the federal government are excluded from the provisions of this chapter.

(b) The Commissioner of Public Health shall administer the provisions of this chapter with respect to the licensing of physical therapist assistants within available appropriations.