

THE SPORTS MEDICINE LICENSURE CLARITY ACT OF 2017 (H.R. 302/S. 808)

POSITION

The American Physical Therapy Association (APTA) strongly urges Congress to pass the Sports Medicine Licensure Clarity Act of 2017 (H.R. 302/S. 808). This bill would provide certain licensure clarifications and legal protections for physicians, physical therapists, and athletic trainers who practice across state lines as they travel with professional and collegiate teams or other athletes and teams sanctioned by a national governing body. H.R. 302 was introduced by Reps Brett Guthrie (R-KY), Cedric Richmond (D-LA), S. 808 was introduced by Sens John Thune (R-SD) and Amy Klobuchar (D-MN). H.R. 302 passed the House on 01/09/2017.

BACKGROUND

Under current law (in many states), sports medicine professionals who travel from their home state (primary) to a secondary state do not receive liability coverage they would in the primary state. This issue becomes quite problematic for physicians, physical therapists, and athletic trainers as they move across state lines to attend sporting events with teams that employ them. They may lose their professional liability insurance coverage during travel and therefore take on significant professional and financial risk to treat injured athletes.

The Sports Medicine Licensure Clarity Act was introduced to address this issue and allow sports medicine professionals (physicians and athletic trainers) to practice without fear of repercussion. APTA asserts that because of physical therapists' extensive work with the treatment of athletes on sports teams who travel across state lines—including the requirement by the National Football League (NFL) that every team have a physical therapist and in that role travel with teams across the country—it is crucial this legislation be approved and signed into law.

WHAT PTs DO FOR ATHLETES

PTs, physicians, and athletic trainers all have a unique educational and experiential background and, therefore, bring different knowledge and abilities to the treatment of athletes on the sidelines.

- Physical therapists provide onsite therapeutic interventions (soft tissue and joint mobilization, certain stretching techniques, postgame rehabilitation and others) at practices, games, and events.
- Physical therapists are uniquely qualified through training to provide movement analysis and to assess musculoskeletal performance and provide physical rehabilitation.
- As physical therapy is a doctoral-level program and the training PTs receive in neurology and balance disorders is different from that of athletic training curricula, the physical therapist is a valuable member of the sports medicine team, especially when dealing with concussions.

For more information on APTA priorities, visit APTA's policy center at <http://policy.apta.org>.



Cosponsor H.R. 302/S. 808 Today!

For additional information, contact the American Physical Therapy Association's Government Affairs Department at 703/706-8533 or advocacy@apta.org.

FACTS ABOUT PHYSICAL THERAPISTS AND PHYSICAL THERAPIST ASSISTANTS



WHO WE ARE

Physical therapists (PTs) are highly-educated, licensed health care professionals who diagnose and treat individuals of all ages, from newborns to the very old, who have medical problems or other health-related conditions that limit their ability to move and perform functional activities in their daily lives. PTs can help patients reduce pain and improve or restore mobility—in many cases without expensive surgery and often reducing the need for long-term use of prescription medications and their side effects. PTs also work with individuals to prevent the loss of mobility before it occurs by developing fitness- and wellness-oriented programs for healthier and more active lifestyles.

PTs examine each individual and develop a plan of care using interventions to promote the ability to move, reduce pain, restore function, and prevent disability.

Physical therapist assistants (PTAs) provide selected physical therapy interventions under the direction and supervision of physical therapists.

WHERE WE PRACTICE

PTs and PTAs provide care for people in a variety of settings, including outpatient clinics or offices; inpatient rehabilitation facilities; skilled nursing, extended care, or subacute facilities; education or research centers; homes; schools; hospices; industrial, workplace, or other occupational environments; and fitness centers and sports training facilities.

EDUCATION AND LICENSURE

All PTs must receive a graduate degree from an accredited physical therapist education program before taking a national licensure examination that permits them to practice. Virtually all programs offer the doctor of physical therapy (DPT) degree. State licensure is required in each state in which a PT practices. PTAs must complete a 2-year associate's degree and are licensed, certified, or registered in most states.

AMERICAN PHYSICAL THERAPY ASSOCIATION

The American Physical Therapy Association (www.apta.org) is a national organization representing more than 98,000 physical therapists, physical therapist assistants, and students nationwide. Its goal is to foster advancements in physical therapist education, practice, and research.

CONTACT INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

Mandy Frohlich
Public Affairs
mandyfrohlich@apta.org
703/706-3374

Michael Matlack
Congressional Affairs
michaelmatlack@apta.org
703/706-3163

Ken Sprague
Congressional Affairs
and Grassroots
kensprague@apta.org
703/706-8509

Justin Elliott
Government Affairs
justinelliott@apta.org
703/706-3161

Michael Hurlbut
Congressional Affairs
michaelhurlbut@apta.org
703/706-3160



American Physical Therapy Association

www.apta.org