Sponsored by:
Assemblyman ANTHONY IMPREVEDUTO
District 32 (Bergen and Hudson)
Assemblyman JEFFREY W. MORAN
District 9 (Atlantic, Burlington and Ocean)

Co-Sponsored by:
Assemblymen Doria, Guear and Assemblywoman Greenstein

SYNOPSIS
Revises statutes regarding physical therapists and physical therapist assistants.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT
As introduced.

(Sponsorship Updated As Of: 10/29/2002)
AN ACT concerning physical therapists and physical therapist assistants and revising parts of the statutory law.

BE IT ENACTED by the Senate and General Assembly of the State of New Jersey:

1. Section 3 of P.L.1983, c.296 (C.45:9-37.13) is amended to read as follows:

3. As used in this act:
   [a.] "Board" means the State Board of Physical Therapy Examiners established pursuant to section 5 of this act.
   [b.] "Direct supervision" means the presence of the supervising physical therapist on site, available to respond to an emergency during any treatment procedure.
   "Physical therapist" means a natural person who [is licensed] holds a current, valid license to practice physical therapy pursuant to the provisions of this act and in accordance with regulations of the board. [A physical therapist shall provide physical therapy treatment to an individual upon the direction of a licensed physician, dentist or other health care practitioner authorized to prescribe treatment.]
   [c.] "Physical therapist assistant" means a person who is licensed pursuant to the provisions of this act and who assists a licensed physical therapist under his direct supervision in accordance with this act and regulations of the board.
   [d.] "Physical therapy" and “physical therapy practice” means the health specialty concerned with the prevention of physical disability and the habilitation or rehabilitation of congenital or acquired physical disabilities resulting from, or secondary to, injury or disease] identification of physical impairment or functional limitation that occurs as a result of injury or congenital or acquired disability, or other physical dysfunction through examination, evaluation and diagnosis of the physical impairment or functional limitation and the establishment of a prognosis for the resolution or amelioration thereof, and treatment of the physical impairment or functional limitation, which shall include, but is not limited to, the alleviation of pain, physical impairment and functional limitation by therapeutic intervention, including treatment by means of manual therapy techniques and massage, electro-therapeutic modalities, the use of physical agents, mechanical modalities, hydrotherapy, therapeutic exercises with or without assistive devices, neurodevelopmental procedures, joint mobilization, functional training in self-care, providing assistance in community and work integration or

EXPLANATION - Matter enclosed in bold-faced brackets [thus] in the above bill is not enacted and is intended to be omitted in the law.

Matter underlined thus is new matter.
reintegration, providing training in techniques for the prevention of injury, impairment, functional limitation, or dysfunction, providing consultative, educational, other advisory services, and collaboration with other health care providers in connection with patient care, and such other treatments and functions as may be further defined by the board by regulation.

(cf: P.L.1983, c.296, s.3)

2. Section 4 of P.L.1983, c.296 (C.45:9-37.14) is amended to read as follows:

4. a. [The practice of physical therapy shall include examination, treatment, or instruction to detect, assess, prevent, correct, alleviate and limit physical disability, bodily malfunction and pain from injury, disease or other physical condition.]

Physical therapy shall also include the evaluation, administration and modification of treatment and instruction, including, but not limited to, the use of physical measures, activities, agents and devices for preventive and therapeutic purposes; neurodevelopmental procedures; the performance and evaluation of tests and measurements; and the provision of consultative, educational and other advisory services for the purpose of preventing or reducing the incidence and severity of physical disability, bodily malfunction and pain consistent with the practice of physical therapy.

b. Nothing in [this section] P.L.1983, c.296 (C.45:9-37.11 et seq.), shall be construed to authorize the [diagnosis of] interpretation of data for the purpose of diagnosing disease, organic condition or the practice of medicine and surgery, chiropractic, podiatry, occupational therapy, or prosthetics by any person not licensed to do so pursuant to [chapter 9 of] Title 45 of the Revised Statutes.

c. Nothing in [this section] P.L.1983, c.296 (C.45:9-37.11 et seq.), shall authorize the practice of dentistry by any person not licensed to do so pursuant to chapter 6 of Title 45 of the Revised Statutes.

(cf: P.L.1983, c.296, s.4)

3. Section 5 of P.L.1983, c.296 (C.45:9-37.15) is amended to read as follows:

5. There is created within the Division of Consumer Affairs in the Department of Law and Public Safety the State Board of Physical Therapy Examiners. The board shall consist of 11 members who are residents of the State, two of whom shall be public members and one of whom shall be a State executive department member appointed pursuant to the provisions of P.L.1971, c.60 (C.45:1-2.1 et seq.). Of the remaining eight members six shall be licensed physical therapists who have been actively engaged in the practice of physical therapy in this State for at least five years immediately preceding their
appointment, one shall be [the administrator of a hospital licensed pursuant to P.L.1971, c.136 (C.26:2H-1 et seq.)] a licensed physical therapist assistant who has been actively engaged in practice as a physical therapist assistant for at least five years immediately preceding his appointment, and one shall be a physician licensed to practice medicine and surgery pursuant to chapter 9 of Title 45 of the Revised Statutes.

The Governor shall appoint members to the board with the advice and consent of the Senate. The Governor shall appoint each member for a term of three years, except that of the physical therapist members first appointed, two shall serve for terms of three years, two shall serve for terms of two years and two shall serve for a term of one year. Each member shall hold office until his successor has been qualified. Any vacancy in the membership of the board shall be filled for the unexpired term in the manner provided for the original appointment. No member of the board may serve more than two successive terms in addition to any unexpired term to which he has been appointed. Upon a vacancy in the membership of the board, any professional association of physical therapists and physical therapist assistants may submit recommendations to the Governor for his consideration. The Governor may remove any member of the board for cause, which may include, but shall not be limited to, professional misconduct and repeated failure to attend board meetings.

(cf: P.L.1983, c.296, s.5)

4. Section 8 of P.L.1983, c.296 (C.45:9-37.18) is amended to read as follows:

8. a. The board shall:

(1) Administer and enforce the provisions of P.L.1983, c.296 (C.45:9-37.11 et seq.) and P.L. , c. (C. ) (now before the Legislature as the bill):

(2) Establish procedures for application for licensure;

(3) Establish standards, adopt and administer examinations for licensure;

(a) (4) Review and pass upon the qualifications of applicants for licensure;

(b) (5) Insure the proper conduct and standards of examinations;

(c) (6) Issue and renew licenses to physical therapists and physical therapist assistants pursuant to this act;

(d. Suspend, revoke or fail) (7) Establish disciplinary measures, including but not limited to, suspending, revoking, or refusing to renew the license of a physical therapist or physical therapist assistant pursuant to the provisions of P.L.1978, c.73 (C.45:1-14 et seq.);

(e) (8) Maintain a record of every physical therapist and physical therapist assistant licensed in this State, his place of business, his place of residence, and the date and number of his license; [and]
(9) Conduct hearings into allegations of misconduct by licensees;
(10) Establish requirements and standards for continuing education
and approve courses that are eligible to meet the requirements as
provided in section 24 of P.L. , c. (C. ) (now before the
Legislature as this bill);
(11) Conduct hearings pursuant to the “Administrative Procedure
Act,” P.L.1968, c.410 (C.52:14B-1 et seq.), except that the board
shall have the right to administer oaths to witnesses, and shall have the
power to issue subpoenas for the compulsory attendance of witnesses
and the production of pertinent books, papers, or records;
(12) Conduct proceedings before any board, agency or court of
competent jurisdiction for the enforcement of the provisions of this
act;
(13) Conduct investigations as necessary and have the enforcement
powers provided pursuant to P.L.1978, c.73 (C.45:1-14 et seq.);
(14) Establish standards, after consultation with other appropriate
professional licensing boards established pursuant to Title 45 of the
Revised Statutes, setting forth the conditions under which a physical
therapist is required to refer an individual being treated by a physical
therapist to a practitioner licensed to practice dentistry, medicine or
surgery in this State, or other appropriate licensed health care
professional;
[f.] (15) Promulgate rules and regulations necessary for the
performance of its duties and the implementation of this act.
b. In addition to the provisions of subsection a. of this section, the
board may establish standards of professional behavior.
(cf: P.L.1983, c.296, s.8)

5. Section 9 of P.L.1983, c.296 (C.45:9-37.19) is amended to read
as follows:
9. No person shall practice physical therapy or act as a physical
therapist assistant, whether or not compensation is received or
expected, unless he holds a valid license to practice in this State;
however, nothing in this section shall be construed to:
   a. Prohibit any student enrolled in a school or post-graduate course
of physical therapy or in a course of study for training as a physical
therapist assistant that is approved or recognized by the board from
performing physical therapy or acting as a physical therapist assistant,
as appropriate, which is necessary to his course of study;
   b. Prohibit any person licensed to practice in this State under any
other law from engaging in the practice for which he is licensed,
provided that the procedures or duties performed by that person are
within the scope of his practice as established by law and the accepted
standards of practice of the profession for which the person is licensed
and provided that the person does not represent himself as a physical
therapist or physical therapist assistant; or
c. Prohibit any person employed by an agency, bureau or division
of the Federal Government from practicing physical therapy within the
scope of his official duties.
(cf: P.L.1983, c.296, s.9)

6. Section 10 of P.L.1983, c.296 (C.45:9-37.20) is amended to
read as follows:
10. a. No physical therapist shall supervise more physical therapist
assistants at any one time than [in the opinion of the board can be
adequately supervised. Under usual circumstances the maximum
number of physical therapist assistants that may be supervised by a
physical therapist shall be two, except that, upon application, the
board may permit the supervision of a greater number of physical
therapist assistants if it feels there would be adequate supervision and
the public health and safety would be served] permitted by the board
by regulation and under terms and conditions established by the board.
b. A licensed physical therapist assistant may initiate patient
physical therapy treatment consistent with the role of a physical
therapist assistant, as defined by the board or otherwise provided in
P.L.1983, c.296 (C.45:9-37.11 et seq.) or P.L. , c. (C. ) (now
before the Legislature as this bill), only at the discretion of, and under
the direct supervision of, a licensed physical therapist.
(cf: P.L.1983, c.296, s.10)

7. Section 11 of P.L.1983, c.296 (C.45:9-37.21) is amended to
read as follows:
11. No physical therapist or physical therapist assistant shall
engage directly or indirectly in the division, transferring, assigning,
rebating or refunding of fees received for professional services or
[shall profit by means of a credit or other valuable consideration as an
unearned commission, discount or gratuity with any person who refers
a patient or with any relative or business associate of the referring
person] pay or accept fees or commissions for referrals for
professional services; however, nothing in this section shall be
construed to prohibit physical therapists who are members of a
professional association or other business entity properly organized
pursuant to law, from making a division of fees among themselves as
determined by contract to be necessary to defray joint operating costs
or pay salaries, benefits, or other compensation to employees.
(cf: P.L.1983, c.296, s.11)

8. Section 12 of P.L.1983, c.296 (C.45:9-37.22) is amended to
read as follows:
12. To be eligible for licensure as a physical therapist [or physical
therapist assistant], an applicant shall [submit to the board
satisfactory evidence that]:
a. [He has graduated from] Have completed a program in physical

therapy from an accredited college or university which has been

approved [for the education and training of physical therapists or

physical therapist assistants by an accrediting agency recognized by the

Council on Post-Secondary Accreditation and the United States

Department of Education] by the board; [and]

b. [He has successfully completed] Successfully complete a

written examination administered by the board [to determine his

competence to practice physical therapy or to act as a physical

therapist assistant];

c. Possess at least a master's degree from an accredited college or

university, except for an applicant who prior to January 1, 2003,

possessed a minimum of a bachelor's degree from an accredited college

or university;

d. Have experience satisfactory to the board, in accordance with

regulations of the board;

e. Be at least 18 years of age;

f. Be of good moral character; and

g. Meet other requirements as may be established by the board by

regulation.

(cf: P.L.1983, c.296, s.12)

9. Section 13 of P.L.1983, c.296 (C.45:9-37.23) is amended to

read as follows:

13. An applicant for licensure who is a graduate of a foreign school

of physical therapy shall furnish evidence satisfactory to the board

that:

a. He has completed a course of study in physical therapy which is

substantially equivalent to that provided in an accredited program [as

described in section 12a. of this act; and] approved by the board;

b. He has successfully completed a written examination [as

provided for in section 12b of this act] administered by the board; and

c. Is a graduate of a recognized college or university.

(cf: P.L.1983, c.296, s.13)

10. Section 14 of P.L.1983, c.296 (C.45:9-37.24) is amended to

read as follows:

14. a. A fee established by the board by regulation shall

accompany each application for licensure. Licenses shall expire

biennially [on January 31] at a time established by the board and may

be renewed upon submission of a renewal application [provided by]

to the board [and payment of a fee]. If the renewal fee is not paid by

[that] the designated date, the license shall automatically expire[;]

but may be [renewed within two years of its expiration date on

payment to] reinstated by the board [of a sum determined by it for
each year or part thereof during which the license was expired and an
additional restoration fee. After a two year period, a license may only
be renewed by complying with the provisions of this act regarding
initial licensure] within two years of its expiration date upon payment
of a reinstatement fee. The license fee payable to the board for a new
or reinstated license may be pro rated at the discretion of the board.
Reinstatement of a license may include a requirement that renewal of
a lapsed license be renewed under the procedures established for initial
licensure.

b. Fees shall be established, prescribed or changed by the board for
examinations, licensure and other services performed pursuant to
section 2 of P.L.1974, c.46 (C.45:1-3.2).
c. All fees and any fines imposed by the board shall be paid to the
board and shall be forwarded to the State Treasurer and be part of the
General Fund.

(cf: P.L.1983, c.296, s.14)

11. Section 15 of P.L.1983, c.296 (C.45:9-37.25) is amended to
read as follows:

15. The written examination provided for in sections 12 and 13
of this act and section 21 of P.L. , c. (C. ) (now before the
Legislature as this bill) shall test the applicant’s knowledge of basic
and clinical sciences as they relate to physical therapy and physical
therapy theory and procedures and any other subjects the board may
deem useful to test the applicant’s fitness to practice physical therapy
or act as a physical therapist assistant. Examinations shall be held
within the State at least twice per year at a time and place to be
determined by the board. The board shall give adequate written notice
of the [exam] examination to applicants for licensure and examination.

If an applicant fails his first examination, he may take a second
[exam not less than six months or] examination no more than two
years from the date of the initial [exam] examination. Additional
examinations [shall be in accordance with standards set by] may be
given at the discretion of the board.

(cf: P.L.1983, c.296, s.15)

12. Section 17 of P.L.1983, c.296 (C.45:9-37.27) is amended to
read as follows:

17. The board shall issue a license to each applicant for licensure
as a physical therapist or physical therapist assistant who, in the
judgment of the board, qualifies for licensure pursuant to this act and
[any rules and regulations promulgated by the board and who is not
disqualified for licensure pursuant to the provisions of P.L.1978, c.73
(C.45:1-14 et seq.)] P.L. , c. (C. ) (now before the Legislature
as this bill).

(cf: P.L.1983, c.296, s.17)
13. Section 18 of P.L.1983, c.296 (C.45:9-37.28) is amended to read as follows:

18. Upon payment to the board of a fee and the submission of a written application on forms provided by it, the board shall issue without examination to a physical therapist or physical therapist assistant who holds a valid license issued by another state or possession of the United States or the District of Columbia which, in the judgment of the board, has education and experience requirements substantially equivalent to the requirements of this act; provided, however, the applicant has not previously failed the board exam referred to in section 15 of this act, in which case licensing shall be at the discretion of the board and P.L. , c. (C. ) (now before the Legislature as this bill).

(cf: P.L.1983, c.296, s.18)

14. Section 19 of P.L.1983, c.296 (C.45:9-37.29) is amended to read as follows:

19. [a. Upon submission of a written application on forms provided by it, the board shall issue a temporary license to a person who has applied for licensure pursuant to this act and who, in the judgment of the board, is eligible for examination. A temporary license shall be available to an applicant with his initial application for examination and he may practice only under the direct supervision of a licensed physical therapist. A temporary license shall expire automatically upon failure of the licensure exam but may be renewed for an additional six month period until the date of the next exam at which time it shall automatically expire and be surrendered to the board.

b.] Upon payment to the board of a fee and the submission of a written application on forms provided by it, the board may issue without examination a temporary license to practice physical therapy or act as a physical therapist assistant in this State to a person who is qualified, in the judgment of the board, to practice as a physical therapist or physical therapist assistant, and who provides evidence that he is in the State on a temporary basis to assist in a medical emergency or to engage in a special project [or], teaching assignment or other activity approved by the board relating to physical therapy practice. A temporary license shall expire one year from its date of issue, however, it may be renewed by the board for an additional [one year] one-year period. A temporary license shall be surrendered to the board upon its expiration.

(cf: P.L.1983, c.296, s.19)

15. Section 20 of P.L.1983, c.296 (C.45:9-37.30) is amended to read as follows:

20. No person, business entity or its employees, agents or
representatives shall use the titles "physical therapist," "physiotherapist," "registered physical therapist," "licensed physical therapist," "physical therapist assistant," "registered physical therapist assistant," "licensed physical therapist assistant," "physical therapy assistant," or the abbreviations "PT" or "RPT," "LPT," "PTA," "RPTA," "LPTA," or any other title, designation, words, letters, abbreviations, or insignia indicating the practice of physical therapy unless licensed to practice as a physical therapist or physical therapist assistant under the provision of this act.

(cf: P.L.1983, c.296, s.20)

16. Section 21 of P.L.1983, c. 296 (C.45:9-37.31) is amended to read as follows:

21. Any person who holds a license as a physical therapist pursuant to this act may use the title "physical therapist," or "licensed physical therapist," or the abbreviations "PT" or "LPT." Any person who holds a license as a physical therapist assistant pursuant to this act may use the title "physical therapist assistant," "licensed physical therapist assistant," or the abbreviations "PTA" or "LPTA."

(cf: P.L.1983, c.296, s.21)

17. Section 4 of P.L.1990, c.68 (C.45:9-37.34a) is amended to read as follows:

4. a. A licensed physical therapist [licensed pursuant to P.L.1983, c.296 (C.45:9-37.11 et seq.)] shall not [use] permit an employee to administer physical modalities to patients unless that employee is a licensed physical therapist, licensed physical therapist assistant, or other health care provider licensed in this State to administer those modalities.

As used in this subsection, physical modalities mean B and C ultraviolet [(B and C bands)], and electromagnetic rays, including, but not limited to, deep heating agents, microwave diathermy, shortwave diathermy, and ultrasound, or any other treatment proscribed by the board.

b. Nothing in this section shall be construed to prohibit any person licensed to practice in this State under any other law from engaging in [the practice for which he is licensed] any activity which is within the scope of his practice.

(cf: P.L.1990, c.68, s.4)

18. Section 1 of P.L.1971, c.60 (C.45:1-2.1) is amended to read as follows:

1. The provisions of this act shall apply to the following boards and commissions: the New Jersey State Board of Accountancy, the New Jersey State Board of Architects, the New Jersey State Board of Cosmetology and Hairstyling, the Board of Examiners of Electrical
Contractors, the New Jersey State Board of Dentistry, the State Board
of Mortuary Science of New Jersey, the State Board of Professional
Engineers and Land Surveyors, the State Board of Marriage and
Family Therapy Examiners, the State Board of Medical Examiners, the
New Jersey Board of Nursing, the New Jersey State Board of
Optometrists, the State Board of Examiners of Ophthalmic Dispensers
and Ophthalmic Technicians, the Board of Pharmacy, the State Board
of Professional Planners, the State Board of Psychological Examiners,
the State Board of Examiners of Master Plumbers, the New Jersey
Real Estate Commission, the State Board of Shorthand Reporting, the
State Board of Veterinary Medical Examiners, the Radiologic
Technology Board of Examiners, the Acupuncture Examining Board,
the State Board of Chiropractic Examiners, the State Board of
Respiratory Care, the State Real Estate Appraiser Board, the State
Board of Social Work Examiners [and], the State Board of Public
Movers and Warehousemen and the State Board of Physical Therapy
Examiners.
(cf: P.L.1995, c.366, s.20)

19. Section 1 of P.L.1974, c.46 (C.45:1-3.1) is amended to read as
follows:
1. The provisions of this act shall apply to the following boards and
commissions: the New Jersey State Board of Accountancy, the New
Jersey State Board of Architects, the New Jersey State Board of
Cosmetology and Hairstyling, the Board of Examiners of Electrical
Contractors, the New Jersey State Board of Dentistry, the State Board
of Mortuary Science of New Jersey, the State Board of Professional
Engineers and Land Surveyors, the State Board of Marriage and
Family Therapy Examiners, the State Board of Medical Examiners, the
New Jersey Board of Nursing, the New Jersey State Board of
Optometrists, the State Board of Examiners of Ophthalmic Dispensers
and Ophthalmic Technicians, the Board of Pharmacy, the State Board
of Professional Planners, the State Board of Psychological Examiners,
the State Board of Examiners of Master Plumbers, the State Board of
Shorthand Reporting, the State Board of Veterinary Medical
Examiners, the Radiologic Technology Board of Examiners, the
Acupuncture Examining Board, the State Board of Chiropractic
Examiners, the State Board of Respiratory Care, the State Real Estate
Appraiser Board [and], the State Board of Social Work Examiners
and the State Board of Physical Therapy Examiners.
(cf: P.L.1995, c.366, s.22)

20. Section 2 of P.L.1978, c.73 (C.45:1-15) is amended to read as
follows:
2. The provisions of this act shall apply to the following boards and
all professions or occupations regulated by, through or with the advice
of those boards: the New Jersey State Board of Accountancy, the
New Jersey State Board of Architects, the New Jersey State Board of
Cosmetology and Hairstyling, the Board of Examiners of Electrical
Contractors, the New Jersey State Board of Dentistry, the State Board
of Mortuary Science of New Jersey, the State Board of Professional
Engineers and Land Surveyors, the State Board of Marriage and
Family Therapy Examiners, the State Board of Medical Examiners, the
New Jersey Board of Nursing, the New Jersey State Board of
Optometrists, the State Board of Examiners of Ophthalmic Dispensers
and Ophthalmic Technicians, the Board of Pharmacy, the State Board
of Professional Planners, the State Board of Psychological Examiners,
the State Board of Examiners of Master Plumbers, the State Board of
Shorthand Reporting, the State Board of Veterinary Medical
Examiners, the Acupuncture Examining Board, the State Board of
Chiropractic Examiners, the State Board of Respiratory Care, the
State Real Estate Appraiser Board, the State Board of Social Work
Examiners, the State Board of Physical Therapy Examiners, the
Professional Counselor Examiners Committee, the New Jersey
Cemetery Board, the Orthotics and Prosthetics Board of Examiners,
the Occupational Therapy Advisory Council, the Electrologists
Advisory Committee, the Alcohol and Drug Counselor Committee, the
Fire Alarm, Burglar Alarm, and Locksmith Advisory Committee, the
Home Inspection Advisory Committee, the Massage, Bodywork and
Somatic Therapy Examining Committee, and the Audiology and
Speech-Language Pathology Advisory Committee.

(cf: P.L.1999, c.403, s.1)

21. (New section) To be eligible for licensure as a physical
therapist assistant, an applicant shall:
   a. Possess at least an Associate in Arts degree from an accredited
      college or university;
   b. Have completed a two-year physical therapist assistant program
      approved by the board at an accredited college or university, or its
      equivalent;
   c. Have experience satisfactory to the board, in accordance with
      regulations of the board;
   d. Have successfully completed an examination administered by the
      board;
   e. Be at least 18 years of age;
   f. Be of good moral character; and
   g. Meet other requirements as may be established by the board by
      regulation.

22. (New section) An applicant for licensure or renewal as a
physical therapist or physical therapist assistant shall:
   a. Execute and submit a sworn statement on a form prescribed by
the board that neither the license for which renewal is sought nor any
similar license or other authority issued by another jurisdiction has
been revoked, suspended, or not renewed; and
b. Present satisfactory evidence that any continuing education
requirements established by this act or the board have been completed.

23. (New section) No person other than a natural person shall be
licensed as, or hold itself out to be licensed as, or practice as a
physical therapist or a physical therapist assistant. Every physical
therapist or physical therapist assistant employed by a corporation or
other business entity shall assume professional responsibility for the
practice of physical therapy or acting as a physical therapist assistant
that is provided under the auspices of the corporation or other
business entity. The board shall establish regulations to effectuate the
provisions of this section, which shall include, but shall not be limited
to, a statement of the responsibilities of licensees under this section.

24. (New section) The board shall establish continuing
professional education requirements for physical therapists and
physical therapist assistants, which requirements shall be a condition
of retaining licensure. The board shall:
 a. Approve only such continuing professional education programs
as are available to all physical therapists and physical therapist
assistants in this State on a nondiscriminatory basis;
 b. Establish standards for continuing professional educational
programs;
c. Accredit educational programs offering credits towards the
continuing professional educational requirements; and
d. Establish the number of credits of continuing professional
education required of each applicant for license renewal. Each credit
shall represent or be equivalent to one hour of actual course
attendance, or in the case of those electing an alternative method of
satisfying the requirements of this act, shall be approved by the board
and certified pursuant to procedures established for that purpose.

25. This act shall take effect immediately.

STATEMENT

This bill amends the current statutes regarding the regulation and
licensure of physical therapists and physical therapist assistants.
As defined in this bill, the practice of physical therapy includes the
diagnosis, treatment and management of physical impairment and
functional limitation. In addition, the bill maintains and clarifies
existing law specifying that physical therapists and physical therapist
assistants are not permitted to diagnose disease and are not authorized
to practice medicine, surgery, chiropractic, podiatry, occupational
therapy, prosthetics or dentistry.

The bill also permits consumers to access directly the services of
physical therapists, thereby assuring that consumers in New Jersey
would have the same access to these regulated professionals as they
have to other rehabilitation and health care providers. Currently, New
Jersey is one of only fifteen states that deny consumers this access.

Further, this bill changes the composition of the State Board of
Physical Therapy in the Division of Consumer Affairs by substituting
a licensed physical therapist assistant for the current hospital
administrator on the board. The bill also renames the State Board of
Physical Therapy as the State Board of Physical Therapy Examiners.

To become licensed as a physical therapist, a candidate must
possess at least a master's degree, except for an applicant who prior to
January 1, 2003, possessed a bachelor's degree; have completed a
physical therapy program; have experience satisfactory to the board
and pass a written examination. To become licensed as a physical
therapist assistant, a candidate must possess at least an Associate of
Arts degree; have completed a two-year physical therapist assistant
program; have experience satisfactory to the board and pass an
examination.