



Physiotherapy Scope of Practice Changes Frequently Asked Questions

What changes came into effect on September 1, 2011 due to amendments to the Physiotherapy Act and the scope of practice?

As of September 1, 2011 physiotherapists/physical therapists can continue to carry out authorized activities they were previously performing. These may include: spinal manipulation, tracheal suctioning and acupuncture. The new authority to communicate a diagnosis can also be performed as it is a part of the profession's entry level competencies. All other new authorities are on hold until the College establishes its rostering model by end of 2011 and authorized activities that are covered by other regulations are adopted.

The Standard of Professional Practice: Performance of Authorized Activities now replaces the Standard of Professional Practice: Controlled Acts.

What are the new authorized activities within the scope of practice for physiotherapists/physical therapists?

The new activities include:

- communicating a diagnosis
- treating a wound below the dermis
- assessing or rehabilitating pelvic musculature
- administering a substance by inhalation
- ordering a prescribed form of energy
- ordering diagnostics, such as x-ray investigations
- ordering specified laboratory tests

What is the difference between a controlled act and an authorized activity?

Authorized activities include all legally restricted health care activities that may only be performed by people who have the appropriate legal authority. Controlled acts are a subset of authorized activities specific to the Regulated Health Professions Act (RHPA). Other authorized activities are restricted under different laws such as the Healing Arts Radiation Protection Act (HARP) and Laboratory and Specimen Collection Centre Licensing Act (LSCCLA) and their regulations.

What is a roster and how and when do I get on the roster?

A roster is a list of physiotherapists/physical therapists who are allowed to perform a specific authorized activity. These lists are managed by the College of Physiotherapists of Ontario and registrants will be required to add their names to the roster (list) for each of the authorized activities they plan to perform. Some physiotherapists/physical therapists will choose not to perform authorized activities and will not need to add their names to any roster with the College.

Part of the application process will require a signed legal declaration stating the individual is competent to perform the authorized activity. Information on the rosters will be accessible on the Public Register. There are no additional fees for getting on a roster. Online rostering will be available from February 1, 2012.



What activities will physiotherapists/physical therapists need to be rostered for when the roster is available and additional regulations are in effect?

Activity	Requires Rostering	Timing	Authority Mechanism
Communicating a diagnosis	NO	September 1, 2011	Physiotherapy Act
Treating a wound beneath the dermis	YES	Before the end of 2011	Physiotherapy Act
Assessing or rehabilitation pelvic musculature	YES	Before the end of 2011	Physiotherapy Act
*Acupuncture	YES <i>*It is currently permitted but registrants need to roster when it becomes available</i>	Before the end of 2011	Regulated Health Professions Act (RHPA) exemption
*Tracheal suctioning	YES <i>*It is currently permitted but registrants need to roster when it becomes available</i>	Before the end of 2011	Physiotherapy Act
Administering a substance by inhalation	YES	Before the end of 2011	Physiotherapy Act <i>substance must be ordered by someone with authority</i>
*Spinal manipulation	YES <i>*It is currently permitted but registrants need to roster when it becomes available</i>	Before the end of 2011	Physiotherapy Act
Ordering a prescribed form of energy	YES	Once related regulations have been approved. Estimated date is 2012.	Physiotherapy Act and Regulated Health Professions Act (RHPA)
Ordering diagnostics—x-ray investigations	YES	Once related regulations have been approved. Estimated date is 2012.	Healing Arts Radiation Protection Act (HARP)
Ordering specified laboratory tests	YES	Once related regulations have been approved. Estimated date is 2012.	Laboratory and Specimen Collection Centre Licensing Act (LSCCLA)

Which authorized activities will NOT be available for rostering in 2011?

Authorized activities that require changes to regulations external to the physiotherapy/physical therapy profession will not be available for rostering until the related regulations are approved by government.

Currently, amendments are in process to the regulations for the Healing Arts Radiation Protection Act (HARP), the Laboratory and Specimen Collection Centre Licensing Act (LSCCLA) and the Regulated Health



Professions Act (RHPA). It has been suggested that these regulations will be approved in 2012.

Until these related regulations are proclaimed and in effect, the College will not be rostering for, and physiotherapists/physical therapists are not permitted to:

- order x-rays for diagnostic imaging purposes
- order laboratory tests
- order a prescribed form of energy (for example, MRI, diagnostic ultrasound)

If I already perform an activity under delegation or medical directives, can I continue to do so?

Physiotherapists/physical therapists who currently perform authorized activities under some other authorization mechanism, such as delegation or medical directive may continue to do so without adding their names to a roster at this time.

Why do I need to roster for an authorized activity if I am already trained to do it?

Putting one's name on the College's list or roster will serve several purposes. It will promote public confidence by allowing patients and others to see which authorized activities a physiotherapist/physical therapist is qualified to perform. It also allows the College to monitor the authorized activities registrants are undertaking and allows for assessment of competencies and practices.

Is special training required to perform authorized activities?

Yes, there are a variety of ways to access training. These include but are not limited to entry level education, formal post-graduate programs specific to the activities, and through informal education programs, including those specific to your employment setting. Education for authorized activities should include a theoretical component, a practical component, and an evaluation of the theoretical knowledge and practical skills. This is described in the Standard for Professional Practice: Performance of Authorized Activities.

Will the College list the approved education programs?

No. It is up to the individual to determine their own needs and seek appropriate training. There are a variety of ways to develop competency and skill.

What if I do not plan to do any of the authorized activities?

Physiotherapists/physical therapists use a variety of skills in their work. Depending upon the kind of practice you are involved in, you may not need or may choose not to do these authorized activities. You do not need to roster with the College if you are not doing any of these authorized activities under independent authority.

What changes were made to the scope of practice of physiotherapy/physical therapy?

The new scope statement reads *“The practice of physiotherapy is the assessment of neuromuscular, musculoskeletal and cardio respiratory systems, the diagnosis of diseases or disorders associated with physical dysfunction, injury or pain and the treatment rehabilitation and prevention or relief of physical dysfunction injury or pain to develop, maintain, rehabilitate or augment function and promote mobility.”* The new statement adds the component of diagnosis of physical dysfunction and it is restructured to



emphasize a systems approach.

What is the difference between a specialty and a roster?

A roster is a list of physiotherapists/physical therapists who have the authority to perform a specific authorized activity. The College directly manages the roster of legally restricted authorized activities.

A specialty is an area of physiotherapy/physical therapy practice in which a registrant has particular expertise or depth of knowledge acquired through focused study and training. Specialties are typically designated by a formal certification program. Council is currently establishing a process to recognize specialty certifications.

What are the risks that physiotherapists/physical therapists should consider when performing authorized activities?

Authorized activities by their very nature are risky activities and have the potential for harm. Physiotherapists/physical therapists should consider the potential for adverse outcomes or side effects and communicate this information with patients. Additionally, physiotherapists/physical therapists should have protocols in place to manage any adverse outcomes or side effects.

What do the changes mean for patients and the public?

Changes to the Physiotherapy Act and the scope of practice for physiotherapy/physical therapy will facilitate increased access to care for Ontarians and allow for increased collaboration between health care professionals, all of which is in the public interest.

How can I learn more about the scope of practice changes and rostering?

Start by reading the Standard of Professional Practice: Performance of Authorized Activities. The College has also released a Scope of Practice Changes webcast and podcast. Coming soon is an E-Learning Module and Guide to the Standard of Professional Practice: Performance Authorized Activities. Visit the College website – www.collegept.org—and watch your inbox for email updates.