

Concurrent Treatment of a Patient by a Physiotherapist and Another Health Care Professional

College publications contain practice parameters and standards which should be considered by all Ontario physiotherapists in the care of their patients and in the practice of the profession. College publications are developed in consultation with the profession and describe current professional expectations. It is important to note that these College publications may be used by the College or other bodies in determining whether appropriate standards of practice and professional responsibilities have been maintained.

Introduction

Concurrent treatment of a patient by a physiotherapist and another health care professional, including another physiotherapist, may be beneficial. However, unless concurrent treatment is provided appropriately, concerns such as the following may arise:

- The treatments provided to the patient for the same or related conditions may inadvertently counteract each other;
- Conflicting advice and/or information may be provided to the patient;
- The physiotherapist may not be able to determine the impact of his or her treatment intervention on the patient; and
- The concurrent treatment may result in an unethical or inefficient use of health care resources.

Standard Statement

In the event of any inconsistency between this standard and any legislation that governs the practice of physiotherapists, the legislation governs.

A physiotherapist will only provide concurrent care when, in his or her professional judgment, the treatment is required, appropriate and compatible with treatment approach of the other treating professional and the care does not constitute an unethical or inefficient use of health care resources.

Performance Expectations

A physiotherapist demonstrates the standard by:

1. Providing concurrent treatment in circumstances where the treatment:
 - is appropriate to the needs of the patient;
 - is complementary to the treatment provided by the other health care professional;
 - is provided following consultation with the other health care professional; and
 - is coordinated with the other health care professional.

2. Not providing concurrent treatment in circumstances where:
 - The other health care professional has a conflicting treatment approach or patient care objective; or
 - The physiotherapy services are an unethical or inefficient duplication of health care services.
3. Ensuring that the health care professional providing the concurrent treatment has a shared scope of practice and similar patient care objectives.
4. In circumstances where, in his or her judgment, the concurrent treatment is unnecessary, clearly communicating this decision to the patient.
5. Ensuring that the funding mechanism that is paying for the care permits more than one health care professional to provide treatment for the patient.
6. Not commenting on other health professionals' qualifications or services other than to provide professional opinions that are necessary in the circumstances.

Definitions

Concurrent Treatment: The circumstance where more than one health care professional is administering or applying remedies, including medical, surgical or other therapies, to a patient for the same or related disease or injury. The circumstance where a patient may be receiving care from multiple health care professionals for different diseases or injuries is not considered to be concurrent care.

References

Professional Misconduct Regulation, Ontario Regulation 388/08
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