

Physiotherapists Working with Physiotherapist Support Personnel

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

This standard describes the College's expectations for physiotherapists working in all practice settings and areas of practice when they utilize and assign physiotherapy care to physiotherapist support personnel.

Standard Statement

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

Physiotherapists are personally responsible and accountable for each of their patients' physiotherapy treatment. This includes those aspects of care that are assigned to physiotherapist support personnel who are working under the direction and supervision of a physiotherapist. Physiotherapists have an obligation to place the needs of each of their patients as primary.

Performance Expectations

A physiotherapist demonstrates the standard by:

1. Obtaining informed consent from each patient or his/her substitute decision maker for the involvement of a physiotherapist support person in the delivery of the physiotherapy treatment plan,
2. Explaining to each patient the relationship between the physiotherapist and the physiotherapist-support person for the purposes of clarifying their individual roles and responsibilities in the assessment, reassessment and progression of the physiotherapy treatment plan.
3. Evaluating the skills, knowledge, abilities and attitudes of the physiotherapist support person in regard to each patient for whom care is assigned.
4. Assessing the type and appropriate level of supervision required for each patient to whom care is assigned and providing a minimum of support through communication by telephone.
5. Assigning only those tasks that the physiotherapist is competent to perform him or herself.

6. Not assigning any physiotherapy intervention that has an evaluation component that immediately influences the treatment program.
7. Ensuring that records pertaining to the use of support personnel are maintained in a manner that is consistent with the College Standard for Professional Practice on Record Keeping.
8. Regularly reassessing the patient and determining if the role of the physiotherapist support person with the patient needs to be changed.
9. Ensuring that the physiotherapist support person is knowledgeable about and adheres to appropriate safety and infection control measures that apply to each patient.
10. Developing criteria and mechanisms for communication between the physiotherapist and the physiotherapist support person.
11. Arranging or ensuring the transfer of supervision for the physiotherapist support person when the physiotherapist is not available.
12. Communicating to his/her employer that, in the event of termination of employment, and the absence of another physiotherapist to supervise the physiotherapy treatment assigned to the physiotherapist support person, treatment will no longer be assigned.

References

Standard for Professional Practice: Record Keeping, College of Physiotherapists of Ontario. 2007
Guide to the Standard for Professional Practice: Record Keeping, College of Physiotherapists of Ontario. 2007

Definitions

Physiotherapist Support Personnel

Group 1:

Individuals who have successfully completed and fulfilled all the requirements of a post secondary program designed to educate the participants in acquiring the knowledge, skills and abilities required to assist a physiotherapist in the delivery of a physiotherapy treatment plan. This group most usually has a designation as a Physiotherapist Assistant (PTA).

Group 2:

Individuals who have completed on-the-job training that is physiotherapy specific. This may include individuals who may have a diploma or degree in a health-related field such as athletic therapy, individuals who are internationally educated in physiotherapy and have not yet completed their registration process, or workers with no health care background.

Date approved: June 2005

Updated January 2007

January 2008