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Ohio Administrative Code

Rule 4755:2-2-01 Code of ethical conduct for physical therapists and physical therapist assistants.

Effective: August 21, 2025

A person licensed by the physical therapy section has a responsibility to work at the highest level of ethics, integrity, and professionalism as guided by this code of ethical conduct.

(A) For the purposes of this rule, the patient-therapist relationship may extend beyond the established plan of care.

(B) Ethical integrity.

License holders shall use the provisions contained in paragraphs (B)(1) to (B)(11) of this rule as guidelines for promoting ethical integrity and professionalism. Failure to comply with paragraphs (B)(1) to (B)(11) of this rule may be grounds for disciplinary action pursuant to section 4755.47 of the Revised Code and in accordance with Chapter 119. of the Revised Code.

(1) A license holder shall respect the rights and dignity of all patients and provide compassionate care as described in paragraphs (B)(1)(a) and (B)(1)(b) of this rule.

(a) A license holder shall recognize individual differences with patients and shall respect and be responsive to those differences.

(b) A license holder shall be guided by concern for the physical, psychosocial, and socioeconomic welfare of patients.

(2) A license holder shall exercise sound judgment, place the best interests of the patient over the interests of the license holder, and act in a trustworthy manner in all aspects of physical therapy practice. Regardless of practice setting, the license holder shall maintain the ability to make independent judgments. A license holder shall strive to effect changes that benefit the patient.

(3) A license holder shall only seek compensation that is reasonable for the physical therapy services

delivered. A license holder shall never place the license holder's own financial interests above the welfare of the license holder's patients. A license holder, regardless of the practice setting, shall safeguard the public from unethical and unlawful business practices.

(4) A license holder shall not intentionally or knowingly offer to pay or agree to accept any compensation, directly or indirectly, overtly or covertly, in cash or in kind, to or from any person or entity for receiving or soliciting patients or patronage, regardless of the source of the compensation.

(5) A license holder shall not influence a patient or the patient's family to utilize, purchase, or rent any equipment based on the direct or indirect financial interests of the license holder. Recommendations of equipment shall be based solely on the therapeutic value of that equipment to the patient. A license holder who owns or has a direct financial interest in an equipment or supply company shall disclose the financial interest to the patient if the license holder sells or rents, or intends to sell or rent, to the patient.

(6) A license holder shall ensure the patient's rights to participate fully in their care, including the patient's right to select the physical therapy provider, regardless of the practice setting.

(7) A license holder shall respect the rights, knowledge, and skills of colleagues and other health care professionals.

(8) A license holder shall safeguard the public from underutilization or overutilization of physical therapy services.

(9) A license holder shall provide accurate and relevant information to patients about the patients' care and to the public about physical therapy services.

(10) A license holder shall report to the physical therapy section any unprofessional, incompetent, or illegal behavior of a physical therapist or physical therapist assistant of which the license holder has knowledge.

(11) Where the alleged violation involves impairment issues and no other provisions of Chapter 4755. of the Revised Code or rules adopted under it, the reporting license holder may make a referral

to the safe haven program in lieu of making report to the physical therapy section.

(C) Ethical conduct.

Ethical conduct includes conforming to the minimal standards of acceptable and prevailing physical therapy practice based on current available evidence. Conduct may be considered unethical regardless of whether or not actual injury to a patient occurred. Failure to comply with paragraphs (C)(1) to (C)(16) of this rule may be grounds for disciplinary action pursuant to section 4755.47 of the Revised Code and in accordance with Chapter 119. of the Revised Code.

(1) A license holder shall adhere to the standards of ethical practice by practicing in a manner that is moral and honorable. A license holder may be disciplined for violating any provision contained in division (A) of section 4755.47 of the Revised Code.

(2) A license holder shall not cheat or assist others in conspiring to cheat on the national physical therapy examination, the state jurisprudence examination, or the renewal jurisprudence module.

(3) A person shall not practice physical therapy without a valid license, or without holding student status, including:

(a) Practicing physical therapy while a person's license is suspended or revoked.

(b) Practicing physical therapy with an expired license or when no longer enrolled as a student in an accredited entry level physical therapy educational program.

(4) A license holder shall obtain informed consent from the patient or legal guardian.

(a) A license holder, unless otherwise allowed by law, shall not provide patient care without disclosing to the patient or the patient's representative, the benefits, substantial risks, if any, or alternatives to the recommended examination or intervention.

(b) Information relating to the patient-therapist relationship is confidential and may not be communicated to a third party not involved in that patient's care without the prior written consent of

the patient or the patient's representative, or unless otherwise allowed by law. Information shall be disclosed when required by law for the protection of the patient or the public.

(5) A license holder shall adhere to the minimal standards of acceptable prevailing practice. Failure to adhere to minimal standards of practice, whether or not actual injury to a patient occurred, includes, but is not limited to:

(a) Failing to assess and evaluate a patient's status;

(b) Performing or attempting to perform techniques, procedures, or both in which the license holder is untrained by education or experience;

(c) Delegating physical therapy functions or responsibilities to a person lacking the ability or knowledge to perform the function or responsibility in question;

(d) Causing, or permitting another person to cause, physical or emotional injury to the patient, or depriving the patient of the individual's dignity;

(e) Providing treatment interventions that are not warranted by the patient's condition or continuing treatment beyond the point of reasonable benefit to the patient;

(f) Practicing in a pattern of negligent conduct, which means a continued course of negligent conduct or of negligent conduct in performing the duties of the profession;

(g) Providing substandard care as a physical therapist assistant by exceeding the authority to perform components of physical therapy interventions selected by the supervising physical therapist or through a deliberate or negligent act or failure to act, whether or not actual injury to any person occurred;

(h) Abandoning the patient by inappropriately terminating the patient-practitioner relationship; or

(i) Documenting or billing for services not actually provided.

(6) A license holder shall not engage in conduct that constitutes harassment or verbal or physical abuse of, or unlawful discrimination against, patients, students and/or colleagues.

(7) A license holder shall not engage in any sexual relationship or conduct, including dating, with any patient, or engage in any conduct that may reasonably be interpreted by the patient to be sexual, whether consensual or nonconsensual, while a therapist-patient relationship exists.

(a) A license holder shall not intentionally expose or view a completely or partially disrobed patient in the course of treatment if the exposure or viewing is not related to the patient diagnosis or treatment under current practice standards.

(b) A license holder shall not engage in a conversation with a patient that is sexual in nature and unrelated to the physical therapy plan of care.

(8) A license holder shall not engage in sexual harassment of patients, students, and/or colleagues. Sexual harassment includes, but is not limited to, making unwelcome sexual advances, requesting sexual favors, and engaging in other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature that results in:

(a) Withholding physical therapy services to a patient;

(b) Creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive environment; or

(c) Interfering with the patient's ability to recover.

(9) A license holder shall not falsify, alter, or destroy patient/client records, medical records, or billing records without authorization. The license holder shall maintain accurate patient and/or billing records.

(10) A license holder shall not practice physical therapy while the ability to practice is impaired by alcohol, controlled substances, narcotic drugs, physical disability, mental disability, or emotional disability. If a license holder's or applicant's ability to practice is in question, and the license holder or applicant is not a participant in the board's safe haven program, the license holder shall submit to a physical or mental examination or drug/alcohol screens as requested by the physical therapy section

to determine the applicant's or license holder's qualifications to practice physical therapy.

(11) A license holder shall not obtain, attempt to obtain, or deliver medications through means of misrepresentation, fraud, forgery, deception, and/or subterfuge.

(12) A license holder shall transfer the continuum of care of the patient, as appropriate, to another health care provider in the event of elective termination of physical therapy services by the license holder.

(13) A license holder shall not aid, abet, authorize, condone, or allow the practice of physical therapy by any person not legally authorized to provide services.

(14) A license holder shall not permit another person to use a person's wall certificate, license number, or national provider identifier, as defined in section 4755.56 of the Revised Code, for any illegal purpose.

(15) A license holder shall not misrepresent the credential, title, and/or specialty certifications held by the license holder.

(16) A license holder providing pro bono service shall provide care according to the minimal standards of acceptable prevailing practice, including documentation, as outlined in paragraph (C)(5) of this rule.

(17) A license holder shall not use technology, social media, or other electronic communications to host, post, or distribute improper or inappropriate material that could reasonably be accessed by the patient community (includes, but is not limited to, pornography, obscene material, promotion of drug use or underage consumption of alcohol, promotion of violence, disparagement of patients, and disparagement based on age, gender, gender identity, race, sex, ethnicity, sexual orientation, disability, military status, or religion.)

(18) A license holder shall not access, browse, or use personal health information or other personally identifiable information without authorization, consent, or as otherwise mandated or permitted by relevant law.

(D) Cooperation.

In accordance with division (A)(24) of section 4755.47 of the Revised Code, license holders shall cooperate with an investigation by the physical therapy section. Failure to cooperate is conduct detrimental to the best interest of the public and grounds for disciplinary action. Cooperation includes responding fully and promptly to any questions raised by the physical therapy section and providing copies of the medical records and other documents requested by the physical therapy section. Failure to comply with paragraphs (D)(1) to (D)(7) of this rule may be grounds for disciplinary action pursuant to section 4755.47 of the Revised Code and in accordance with Chapter 119. of the Revised Code.

(1) A license holder shall respond fully and truthfully to a request for information from the physical therapy section.

(2) A license holder shall comply with a subpoena issued by the physical therapy section.

(3) A license holder shall provide information or document within the time frame specified by the physical therapy section.

(4) A license holder shall appear and provide information at an interview requested by the physical therapy section.

(5) A license holder shall not deceive, or attempt to deceive, the physical therapy section regarding any matter, including by altering or destroying any record or document.

(6) A license holder shall not interfere with an investigation or disciplinary proceeding by willful misrepresentation of facts before the agency or the physical therapy section, or by use of threats or harassment against any patient or witness to prevent the patient or witness from providing evidence in a disciplinary proceeding or any other legal action.

(7) A license holder shall not refuse to provide testimony in an administrative hearing.

(E) Reporting requirements.

A license holder shall self report to the physical therapy section, within thirty days, any of the items outlined in paragraphs (A) to (G) of this rule. Failure to comply with this rule may be grounds for disciplinary action pursuant to section 4755.47 of the Revised Code and in accordance with Chapter 119. of the Revised Code.

(1) Impairment due to abuse of or dependency on alcohol, drugs, or other physical or mental illness that affects the applicant's or license holder's ability to practice with reasonable skill and safety. This reporting rquirement shall not be applicable where the applicant or license holder is a participant in the board's safe haven program and complies with the same.

(2) Conviction of a felony or intervention in lieu of a felony.

(3) Conviction of a misdemeanor when the act that constituted the misdemeanor occurred during the practice of physical therapy.

(4) The termination, revocation, or suspension of membership by a state or national physical therapy professional association.

(5) The termination, revocation, suspension, or sanctioning of a credential issued by a state or national professional credentialing organization.

(6) The termination, revocation, suspension, or sanctioning of a credential for any state license issued by a state or national physical therapy credentialing organization, including the PT compact.

(7) A positive drug and/or alcohol screening.

(8) A finding of malpractice by a court of competent jurisdiction.