

# Education Strategic Plan

## (2006-2020)

### Preamble

The content of the Education Strategic Plan represents the specific initiatives the American Physical Therapy Association (Association) deems critical to the realization of Vision 2020. The implementation of the plan, including sequencing, timing, methodology, and outcomes (eg, strategies included or absent, order of the goals), depend on the ongoing interaction with stakeholders and thus should be viewed as dynamic and evolving. Portions of the plan will be integrated into other Association plans and initiatives.

The goals and objectives in the Education Strategic Plan may be used by the Association, by the Association's components (chapters, sections and assemblies), and by educational and clinical entities to promote the realization of Vision 2020. Successful implementation of the plan will require commitment and broad participation by all stakeholders. Unless otherwise indicated, the goals and objectives address both the physical therapist and the physical therapist assistant. Implementation of the plan will begin in 2006 and periodic re-evaluation of the plan will occur in 2010, 2015, and 2020.

### Goals

**Goal 1:** Establish a clinical education system for the physical therapist (PT) and physical therapist assistant (PTA) that is fiscally sound, collaborative with other professions, and based on a partnership model between the academic program and clinical site, with mutually agreed upon standards and outcomes that support contemporary physical therapy practice.

#### Objectives

- Define the essential elements of the partnership relationship.
- Convene all stakeholders in clinical education (clinical faculty, students, higher education administrators, payers, regulators) to devise a strategic plan with standards and outcomes and alternative models (eg, service learning).
- Establish and implement standard expectations for what constitutes the depth and breadth of clinical education within a curriculum.
- Establish and implement mandatory minimum standards for clinical instructors, center coordinators of clinical education, and clinical sites, including the option of completing a credentialing process.
- Explore licensure systems that can accommodate alternative clinical education models.

**Goal 2:** Develop systems to promote and measure continued competence.

#### Objectives

- Establish an efficient, cost-effective system for advancing clinical practice skills.
- Explore the development of outcome measures based on patient satisfaction and patient outcomes that measure performance.
- Establish quality standards and benchmarks for continued competence.
- Based on the quality standards, establish a national system for approval/assessment of continuing education (CE) providers, CE offerings, instructors, and learners' outcomes.
- Provide methods of assessing continued competence that are reliable, evidence-based, and cost effective for all stakeholders.

- Build career development mechanisms that support lifelong learning and self-reflection, (eg, portfolios, shelf exams, ready to work programs).
- Develop a mechanism for maintenance of licensure/certification that is not overly cumbersome and is tailored to the individual's practice area.
- Investigate the feasibility of developing certificates in non-clinical areas, such as administration, teaching, scholarship, consultancy, etc.

#### Strategies

- Develop models for career development for PTAs.
  - Identify appropriate continuing education courses/content for the PTA.
  - Outline professional development tracks in physical therapy for the clinician, consultant, educator, administrator, and researcher.
- #### Strategies
- Delineate the role and relationships among the Association, academic institutions, and continuing education providers in professional development.
  - Identify the role of clinical residencies, fellowships, and board certification in professional development.
  - Promote quality postprofessional education through academic programs that include degree-based programs, clinical residencies, clinical fellowships, certificate programs, and continuing education.
  - Promote the tracks to academic faculty, clinical educators, and to students.
  - Identify sources of financial support for early career development (financial aid, post-doctoral fellowships, fellowships/residencies).
  - Incorporate distance and e-learning into the tracks.
  - Incorporate mentoring into the learning process.
  - Through professional development, reinforce a patient-centered and values-based focus that includes the development of professionalism across the practice continuum.

**Goal 3:** Determine competencies at different stages of professional development beyond entry-level (eg, at the end of a year-long internship, early career, expert) to facilitate lifelong learning.

**Objectives**

- Determine where the “entry-level” threshold should be set (eg, the knowledge, skills and abilities of the entry-level graduate).

*Strategies*

- Consider models of professional development when setting the entry-level threshold.
- Collect and share information on how academic programs are implementing, sequencing, and emphasizing (amount of time spent) content in the PT and PTA Normative Models, *Guide to Physical Therapist Practice*, and the Minimum Required Skills of Physical Therapist Graduates at Entry-level within the curriculum.
- Determine/create outcome measures for each stage of professional development.

*Strategies*

- Define a set of outcomes with relevant evidence-based benchmarks for each stage.
- Develop and implement a process to educate the physical therapy community to evaluate outcomes.
- Determine if there is a gap between expected educational outcomes and current practice.
- Perform ongoing assessment/reassessment related to the outcome measures.
- Incorporate identified competencies and outcome measures into accreditation and licensure.

**Goal 4:** Establish an ongoing systematic data collection process and database(s) for physical therapy practice, education, and research that will allow the profession to forecast, develop strategic plans, support the creation of laws and regulations, and conduct research.

**Objectives**

- Identify and utilize, where appropriate, existing data sources outside the Association.
- Establish easily accessible, user-friendly databases.
- Develop educational algorithms that result in the best outcomes and that define the most cost-effective means for providing classroom and distance education.

*Strategies*

- Collaborate with other disciplines and administrators.

**Goal 5:** Advocate for the physical therapy educational community in the context of social, governmental and regulatory practices and policies.

**Objectives**

- Prepare PTs and PTAs to be advocates for patients/clients and the profession in clinical, administrative, regulatory, and health policy arenas.

*Strategies*

- Prepare PT and PTA students to assume an advocacy position within their future practice/work environments.

- Develop a grassroots process that can be applied in various settings (educational institutions, clinical practices) that will prepare PTs and PTAs to become persuasive advocates.
- Prepare PTs and PTAs to participate in advocacy efforts for appropriate levels of reimbursement.

- Advocate for increased sources of funding for entry-level and postprofessional education.

*Strategies*

- Advocate for the expansion of and access to public and private funding for students (eg, Stafford loans, loan forgiveness, rural practice, industry support, scholarship development, and government funded traineeships for entry-level students) and PTs enrolled in postprofessional education programs.
- Investigate and identify funding sources that support efforts to recruit minority faculty.
- Advocate collaboratively with health professions and others or funding for clinical faculty that provide clinical education and for clinical education site support.
- Advocate for laws and regulations that require effective measures for continued competence.
- Advocate for resources for faculty scholarship.

*Strategies*

- Advocate for rehabilitation research funding collaboratively with other health professionals.
- Advocate for PTs involvement in study sections, review panels, and advisory panels for the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and other federal funding agencies.
- Advocate for PTs involvement in advisory groups to 3rd party payers, including peer review/utilization review activities.

**Goal 6:** Disseminate, fund, and implement the education research agenda.

**Goal 7:** Identify and use strategies to effect behavioral change in physical therapists and student physical therapists to:

- Use evidence in practice.
- Integrate the concepts and information in the *Guide to Physical Therapist Practice* into clinical practice.
- Use disablement and enablement models.
- Integrate professionalism core values into physical therapy practice.
- Practice autonomously.
- Use and apply technology.
- Document patient care meeting minimal standards.
- Negotiate effectively for quality of care over productivity or bottom line initiatives.
- Demonstrate cultural competence in patient care activities.

**Objectives**

- Develop a list of behaviors and competencies reflective of the desired behaviors.
- Create and make available tools to integrate the teaching of professional behaviors in curricula.

- Develop instruments to measure professional behaviors, including at admission.
- Identify best practices for teaching and effecting behavioral change.
- Create a mechanism to share best practices.

**Goal 8:** Enhance the physical therapist's perception, knowledge, and skills in contemporary and emerging health trends and in the delivery of health care in the following areas:

- Health promotion and wellness
- Healthy aging
- PTs role as exercise experts
- Practitioner of choice and portal of entry for the neuromusculoskeletal systems
- Primary contact
- Complementary or integrative health care
- Disease management
- Health disparities
- Other new practice areas based on advances in science and technology, a comprehensive assessment of societal needs, and evidence.
- Practice management, including financial, business and risk management.

**Objectives**

- Identify the scope of what is being taught in entry-level and professional development venues in each of these areas.
- Determine how to enhance educational offerings in these areas based on the assessment and evidence.
- Address appropriate utilization of resources in professional and postprofessional education courses.
- Address public relations and marketing in professional and postprofessional education courses.
- Encourage physical therapists to pursue first party pay or direct contracting.

**Goal 9:** Develop and implement a plan to recruit qualified, diverse applicants to physical therapist and physical therapist assistant programs.

**Objectives**

- Perform an analysis of the profession to identify barriers to diversity and cultural competence.
- Implement identified strategies from the Association Task Force generating the response to RC 28-05 Promoting Physical Therapy as the Profession of Choice to High School and College Students Across the United States.
- Identify the personal characteristics in candidates we perceive as essential to becoming autonomous practitioners and include screening methods in the recruitment process to identify these characteristics.
- Investigate the development of a set of preferred prerequisites for admission into professional physical therapist education programs.
- Collaborate with academia to identify future workforce needs for PTs and PTAs, and strategies to effectively meet those needs.

- Explore the creation of a common application, notification, and acceptance process for physical therapy education program admission.

**Strategies**

- Investigate application processes in other doctoring health professions and their risks and benefits.

**Goal 10:** Develop strategies to address physical therapy faculty supply and demand.

**Objectives**

- Establish professional norms for the optimum number of faculty in PT and PTA academic programs.
- Obtain data on faculty supply and demand.
- Develop and implement a plan to recruit and retain diverse, qualified faculty members.
- Provide mechanisms for faculty to achieve life balance.
- Identify alternative faculty models (eg, entrepreneur free lance).
- Investigate and develop collaborative and cooperative models or shared faculty and resources between and among academic institutions offering physical therapy programs.

**Strategies**

- Explore and gather examples of existing cooperative models.
- Disseminate alternative cooperative shared faculty/resource models with academic programs.
- Develop a faculty mentor system across institutions.
- Develop alternative classification schemes, compensation, and rewards for faculty relative to teaching and scholarship expectations.

**Strategies**

- Investigate other health professions at the professional doctoral level to identify faculty models used and resources and funding available for teaching and scholarship (eg, Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SOTL)).
- Determine how the Doctor of Physical Therapy (DPT) credential for faculty fits into physical therapist education.

**Goal 11:** Develop leaders in physical therapy academic and clinical education and research with established roles and influence in prominent national and international agencies.

**Objectives**

- Provide training opportunities via a national leadership institute.
- Provide leadership mentoring.
- Develop partnerships with higher education administration.
- Develop an educational outcomes assessment model in response to accountability demands for higher education programs.
- Model cost-effective and efficient use of technology.
- Model PTA program design and PTA utilization internationally.
- Advocate for the involvement of PT faculty in agencies such as the World Health Organization (WHO), the NIH, The Pew Research Center, the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations (JCAHO), etc.

**Goal 12:** Create a strategic plan for the development of Clinical Residency and Fellowship programs in a broad range of specialty practices that includes target numbers, grandfathering, financial implications, employer implications, and career pathways.

**Objectives**

- Determine how clinical residency programs can contribute to the development of advanced clinical practice skills for the majority of physical therapists.
- Promote the expectation that residency graduates sit for board certification for specialty areas in which board certification exists.
- Increase awareness of the existence of and rationale for clinical residency and fellowship programs.
- Devise strategies to increase the number of clinical residency and fellowship programs.
- Provide incentives to clinical sites with demonstrated excellence to partner with academic programs to serve as sites for residency training.
- Establish mechanisms that would allow consumers to compare programs.

**Goal 13:** Collaborate with others to develop customized software/hardware applications and medical computer simulations to enhance on-site and distance education.

**Objectives**

- Cultivate partnerships with other disciplines and the technology industry.
- Create customized educational software that provides the opportunity for interactive clinical decision-making across a variety of patient conditions.
- Develop customized software that meets the needs of education, practice, research, and health policy.

**Goal 14:** Enhance and promote the physical therapist board certification process.

**Objectives**

- Promote a culture that communicates the value of the American Board of Physical Therapy Specialties (ABPTS) certification to all communities.
- Develop a re-credentialing process that engages certified specialists to maintain competence for the duration of their specialty practice.
- Promote initial certification in existing specialty areas and identify emerging content domains for the purpose of developing additional specialist certification credentials.

- Demonstrate the value of board certification in the areas of physical therapist outcomes, advancement of practice, and professional development.

**Goal 15:** Provide opportunities for academic and clinical faculties to develop approaches to teaching using evidenced-based strategies that are effective in promoting learning.

**Objectives**

- Provide physical therapy faculty learning opportunities related to the use of instructional technology.
- Provide clinicians with opportunities to explore and adopt learner-centered approaches to teaching.
- Promote the use of varied teaching/learning strategies that maximize educational opportunities for all students, including those with disabilities.

**Strategies**

- Investigate the use of standardized patients and compare outcomes with other methodologies.

**Goal 16:** Promote interprofessional (eg, interdisciplinary) and intraprofessional education within physical therapist and physical therapist assistant curricular models.

**Objectives**

- Identify models of interprofessional and intraprofessional education.
- Compare interprofessional educational initiatives to traditional models.
- Distribute information about best practices in interprofessional and intraprofessional education.
- Promote the work of the Association of Teachers of Preventive Medicine Healthy People Curriculum Task Force related to interprofessional education in clinical prevention and population health.

**Goal 17:** Collaborate with the Federation of State Boards of Physical Therapy (FSBPT) to develop PT and PTA licensure examinations that assess students in the cognitive, psychomotor, and affective domains through a variety of methods.

**Objectives**

- Assess knowledge that is tested in relationship to what is being taught in PT and PTA education programs.

**Goal 18:** Collaborate and interact with the Commission on Accreditation in Physical Therapy Education (CAPTE) to facilitate continued excellence in physical therapy entry-level and postprofessional education.

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