On March 13, 2018, Michigan Governor Rick Snyder signed legislation adding physical therapists to the list of providers who may provide certification of a person’s disabling condition for purposes of windshield placards, special registration plates, motor vehicle registration plate tabs, and free parking stickers.

Disability Plates, Placards, and Parking Stickers
Under Michigan’s Vehicle Code, a person with certain disabilities may apply to the state for special license plates, stickers, and placards entitling them to certain types of parking privileges. Prior to the enactment of this legislation, only physicians, physician assistants, or certified nurse practitioners were permitted to determine a qualifying disabling condition.

With many individuals with qualifying mobility limitations already under the care of a physical therapist, this legislation provides Michigan residents with more efficient access to health care professionals who can address their mobility needs. The bill will go into effect 90 days after it is enacted.

In 2014, the APTA House of Delegates adopted a position supporting increased consumer access to mobility status certification by advocating for changes in state laws to add physical therapists as a designated provider able to determine the mobility status of a patient or client for the purposes of disability parking placards or license plates.

Statement from the Michigan Physical Therapy Association
“Michigan statutes regarding the practice of physical therapy have been notoriously antiquated, and the Michigan Physical Therapy Association has been systematically working to address as many of these issues as possible. We are very pleased with the warm, supportive reception of this bill by Michigan’s legislators, who clearly recognize the movement system expertise of physical therapists.” – Michael Shoemaker, PT, DPT, PhD, MPTA chapter president

Of note: Michigan is fifth state to allow physical therapists to make determinations of disability for purposes of parking placards and plates, following Colorado, Louisiana, Maryland, and Missouri. A similar bill (HF 3056) is pending in Minnesota this year. This is just one of the many state legislative issues being addressed by APTA and its state chapters. Members can track state legislation of interest to the physical therapy profession through APTA’s State Legislative Tracking Map.