

THE ROLE OF PHYSICAL THERAPY IN HOSPICE AND PALLIATIVE CARE HOD P06-11-14-11 [Position]

Whereas, The American Physical Therapy Association (APTA) Code of Ethics for the Physical Therapist and Standards of Ethical Conduct for the Physical Therapist Assistant state that physical therapists and physical therapist assistants, respectively, shall act in the best interest of patients/clients in all practice settings. In addition, physical therapists and physical therapist assistants shall advocate for the reduction of disparity in health care, as well as improved access to health care services for all individuals;

Whereas, Individuals facing life-threatening or terminal illnesses frequently experience decreases in strength and functional capacity, and encounter symptom management and pain control issues that can impair quality of life. Caregivers often voice concerns regarding the appropriate manner in which to care for individuals in hospice or palliative care and frequently expose themselves to physical tasks that may put them at risk of injury without proper training;

Whereas, Throughout the continuum of life, physical therapists are experts in diagnosing and treating movement dysfunction, ergonomics, and managing pain to optimize quality of life and function for the patient/client and caregivers; and,

Whereas, Physical therapists and physical therapist assistants, as part of the interdisciplinary team, are well equipped to meet the needs of, and maximize quality of life for, individuals in hospice or palliative care;

Resolved, The American Physical Therapy Association endorses the inclusion of the following concepts in hospice and palliative care:

- Continuity of care and the active, compassionate role of physical therapists and physical therapist assistants in hospice and palliative care
- Respect for the rights of all individuals to have appropriate and adequate access to physical therapy services, regardless of medical prognosis or setting
- An interdisciplinary approach, including timely and appropriate physical therapist and physical therapist assistant involvement, especially during transitions of care or during a physical or medical change in status
- Education of physical therapists, physical therapist assistants, and respective students in the concepts related to treating an individual while in hospice and palliative care
- Appropriate and comparable coverage and payment for physical therapy services for individuals who have transitioned to hospice or palliative care in all clinical settings

Relationship to Vision 2020: Autonomous Practice; Direct Access; Practitioner of Choice; Professionalism (Practice Department, ext 3176)

Explanation of Reference Numbers:

BOD P00-00-00-00 stands for Board of Directors/month/year/page/vote in the Board of Directors Minutes; the "P" indicates that it is a position (see below). For example, BOD P11-97-06-18 means that this position can be found in the November 1997 Board of Directors minutes on Page 6 and that it was Vote 18.

P: Position | S: Standard | G: Guideline | Y: Policy | R: Procedure