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AMERICAN BOARD OF PHYSICAL THERAPY SPECIALTIES RECOGNIZES BOARD-CERTIFIED CLINICAL SPECIALISTS

ALEXANDRIA, VA, August 10, 2016 — The American Board of Physical Therapy Specialties (ABPTS) of the American Physical Therapy Association (APTA) announces that 2,073 physical therapists were awarded certification and 650 were awarded re-certification as board-certified clinical specialists in 2016.

In opening remarks at the post-professional certification recognition ceremony at APTA's 2016 Combined Sections Meeting, Don Straube, PT, PhD, NCS, immediate past chair of ABPTS and board-certified specialist in neurology physical therapy stated, “Certified clinical specialists play a critical role in the provision of high quality physical therapy services in a dynamic health care environment. Board-certification helps us pursue the highest level of skill with which to best serve our patients.”

To obtain board certification, candidates must submit evidence of required clinical practice in one of 9 specialty areas: Cardiovascular and Pulmonary, Clinical Electrophysiology, Geriatrics, Neurology, Oncology, Orthopaedics, Pediatrics, Sports, and Women’s Health Physical Therapy. Candidates must also successfully complete a rigorous written examination that demonstrates specialized knowledge and advanced clinical proficiency in a specialty area of physical therapist practice. Oncology is a new specialty area; it is anticipated that the first board-certified clinical specialists in oncology physical therapy will be recognized in 2019.

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Certifications are valid for a 10-year period. In order to recertify, ABPTS has developed a maintenance model that focuses on continuing competence of the physical therapist specialist. This new model has been titled the "Maintenance of Specialist Certification" and includes the following elements: professional standing and direct patient care hours, commitment to lifelong learning through professional development, practice performance through examples of patient care and clinical reasoning, and cognitive expertise through a test of knowledge in the profession.

APTA's House of Delegates established specialist certification as a mechanism to formally recognize physical therapists who have demonstrated advanced clinical knowledge and skills in a particular area of physical therapist practice. Since the program's inception in 1985, there has been a steady and substantial increase in the number of physical therapists who pursue specialist certification each year. To date, more than 20,000 physical therapists have achieved board certification.

ABPTS was established by APTA as the governing body that awards certification to physical therapists who meet approved requirements. ABPTS oversees the physical therapist clinical specialist certification and recertification programs, and awards specialist credentials to physical therapists meeting approved requirements.

The American Physical Therapy Association represents more than 93,000 physical therapists, physical therapist assistants, and students of physical therapy nationwide. Learn more about the types of conditions physical therapists can treat, and find a physical therapist in your area, by visiting www.MoveForwardPT.com. Follow Move Forward PT on Twitter and Facebook. Consumers can locate a board-certified specialist online by using the Directory of Board Certified Specialists. Like us on Facebook at https://www.facebook.com/ABPTS.

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