AMERICAN BOARD OF PHYSICAL THERAPY SPECIALTIES:
Enhancing Professional Development through Certification

Objectives
Upon completion of this presentation, you'll be able to:
1. Discuss the role of specialist certification in advancing your clinical practice and importance to our profession
2. List the current areas of specialty practice
3. Provide an overview and describe the process for ABPTS certification and Maintenance of Specialist Certification Program
   • Describe the minimum eligibility requirements and role of clinical residencies
4. Identify top motivations to pursue ABPTS specialist certification

Clinical Excellence: Dimensions

Clinical Excellence: Potential Pathways

What is Clinical Specialization?
A formal process established to:
• recognize physical therapists with advanced clinical knowledge, experience, and skills in a special area of practice
• assist consumers and health care community in identifying physical therapists who are specialists
• meet a specific area of patient need

Key Elements of Board Certification

Voluntary: You decide
Unrestrictive: Does not prohibit others
Coordinated: All areas of specialization managed by a central mechanism: ABPTS
What does Clinical Specialization Require?

- Broad based foundation of physical therapy education and clinical practice
- Depth and breadth of knowledge in a specialty area
- Advanced clinical expertise and skills

Purpose of Board Certification

- Promote
  - highest possible level of physical therapy care
  - ongoing development of science and art underlying each specialty practice
- Recognize specialists through a reliable and valid method
- Inform stakeholders of physical therapists who are certified in a specialty area

Areas of Specialty Practice Recognized through ABPTS Board Certification

1. Cardiovascular & Pulmonary (CCS)
2. Clinical Electrophysiologic (ECS)
3. Geriatrics (GCS)
4. Neurology (NCS)
5. Orthopaedics (OCS)
6. Pediatrics (PCS)
7. Sports (SCS)
8. Women’s Health (WCS)

Minimum Eligibility Requirements

1. Current license to practice physical therapy in the United States, District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, or Virgin Islands
2. 2,000 hours minimum of direct patient care
   - as a licensed physical therapist in the specialty area
   - 25% (500 hrs) of which must have occurred in the last 3 years.

Minimum Eligibility Requirements

Direct patient care must include activities:
- in each element of the patient/client management model, as defined in the Guide to Physical Therapy Practice
- included in the Description of Specialty Practice (DSP)

Other Eligibility Requirements

Specific to the specialty:
- Emergency care certification (SCS)
- ACLS certification, Data Analysis Project (CCS)
- Patient reports (ECS)
- Case reflections (WCS)
Other Option to Meet the Eligibility Requirements for Specialty Certification

**APTA Credentialed Clinical Residency**
- Program of post-professional clinical and didactic education designed to advance the physical therapist's skill in a defined practice area
- www.abptrfe.org
- Residency Curriculum - designed using the DSP
- Specialty councils may allow completion of an APTA-credentialed clinical residency to replace all or a portion of the practice eligibility requirements

Board Examination
- Developed by the Specialty Councils, in collaboration with the National Board of Medical Examiners
- A rigorous, criterion referenced exam that tests the application and synthesis of:
  - advanced knowledge
  - clinical skills & reasoning

Components of the Examination*
- Patient Care
- Teaching
- Administration
- Consultation
- Communication
- Interpretation of Research

*As defined by a specific DSP

Description of Specialty Practice (DSP)
- Describes the advanced knowledge, skills, and abilities for clinical practice in a specialty area
- Based on the results of an extensive practice analysis conducted by Specialty Councils and approved by ABPTS
- Guides the development of the certification exam

Where to Start?
- Description of Specialty Practice
  - Self-Assess strengths and weakness
- Develop a plan and strategy, decide on a “path”

Path towards Clinical Specialization
- Clinical experience in specialty area
- Seeking mentors
- Professional Development
  - Board certified specialists
  - Knowledge and skills
  - Continuing education
  - Post professional clinical residency
  - Post professional education
Preparing for the Board Certification Examination

1. Continuously review and adapt your “path”
2. Use resources from APTA Sections
   - Recommended textbooks
   - Reading lists
   - Advanced Clinical Practice Courses
3. Join a study group
4. Attend continuing education
5. Seek the guidance of a mentor

★ ABPTS does not approve or review material or course content ★

Specialist Certification Application Process

- **On-line Application**
  - www.abpts.org

- **Deadlines for 2015 exam**
  - July 1, 2014 – WCS, CCS, ECS
  - July 31, 2014 – all other specialties

- **All applications are reviewed**
  - APTA Department of Post-Professional Certification and Credentialing

Specialist Certification Fees

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>APTA Member</th>
<th>Non-Member</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Application Review</td>
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<tr>
<td>Examination</td>
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<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
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<td><strong>$2,385</strong></td>
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Certification is valid for ten years

When is the certification exam administered?

- Once per year, over a two-week exam period
- Candidates may sit for the exam between February and March
  - 2014 – March 1-15
  - 2015 – February 28-March 14

Examination Format

- Computerized exams, administered at Prometric test centers worldwide
  - www.prometric.com
- Multiple choice questions including case scenarios, videos, and pictures

Recognition of Certified Clinical Specialists

- Opening Ceremony of APTA Combined Sections Meeting
- APTA sections and State chapters
- Inclusion in online Directory of Certified Specialists
- Only individuals who have successfully completed the ABPTS certification process may use the term: “Board-Certified Clinical Specialist”
Total Numbers of Certified Specialists by Year

Certified Specialists by Area

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Number</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cardiovascular &amp; Pulmonary</td>
<td>CCS</td>
<td>187</td>
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<tr>
<td>Clinical Electrophysiologic</td>
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<tr>
<td>Women's Health</td>
<td>WCS</td>
<td>194</td>
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Total in 2013 = 14,392

Certified Clinical Specialists: Age

- 50 and over
- Age 40-49
- Age 30-39
- Under 30

Certified Clinical Specialists: Gender

- Female 56%
- Male 44%

Certified Clinical Specialists: Work Settings

1. Private PT Office
2. Health system or hospital-based outpatient facility or clinic
3. Academic Institution

Certified Clinical Specialists: Positions Held

1. Supervisor/Director of PT
2. Staff or Senior PT
3. Sole Owner/Partner PT Practice
4. Academic Faculty
Top Motivations to Pursue ABPTS Certification

- Professional career goal
- Personal challenge or achievement
- Earn a credential that reflects advanced practice to patients, physicians, & payers
- Proof of expertise in specialty area

Source: Survey of certified specialists (2013)

Positive Impact of Board Certification

- Sense of personal achievement
- Self-confidence & professional growth
- Patient care, including better outcomes
- Increased credibility with patients & referral sources
- Recognition in clinical, academic and community settings

Source: Survey of certified specialists (2007)

How has board specialty certification influenced the careers of Specialists?

- Opened doors for professional growth
  - Consultations
  - Invited Presentations
  - New job opportunities
  - Leadership & service
  - Teaching opportunities
  - Research collaboration
  - Networking

Service Opportunities Related to Specialization

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ABPTS</th>
<th>Specialty Councils</th>
<th>SME</th>
<th>CCE</th>
<th>SACE</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Oversees all specialties</td>
<td>• Oversees exam development process, MOSC, practice analysis</td>
<td>• Conduct exam standard setting and specialty practice analysis</td>
<td>• Edit exam items</td>
<td>• Write exam items</td>
</tr>
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Employer Support of ABPTS Certification

- 53% pay at least some of the costs associated with obtaining clinical specialization.
- 43% give priority in hiring to job applicants who are board certified.
- Employers value the expertise of specialist.
  - Have high patient care standards
  - Serve as mentors for others
  - Provide team leadership

Value of ABPTS Certification to Certified Specialists

- 79% report that certification is an indicator of clinical competence
- 90% report that certification is an indicator of depth and breadth of knowledge in an area of specialty practice
- High rate (68%) of specialists choose to recertify

Source: Survey of certified specialists (2007)
### Specialist Recertification: Purpose

- verify current competence as an advanced practitioner in a specialty area
- encourage ongoing education and professional growth

### Specialist Recertification: Requirements

For specialists certified before 2013:

- Direct patient care hours in specialty (2000 hr)
  **AND**
- Professional Development Portfolio
  **OR**
- Current written examination
  **OR**
- Graduation from a credentialed APTA clinical residency

### Professional Development Portfolio (PDP)

- Documentation of professional development activities and advanced clinical practice related to specialty practice, since initial certification
- Examples:
  - Continuing Education courses
  - Clinical Supervision
  - College/University courses
  - Teaching continuing education or college courses
  - Research presentations
  - Presentations to professional groups or in-services
  - Presentations to community or client-based groups
  - Author or editor of book chapters, journal articles, grant proposals
  - Committee membership in professional organization
  - Consultation

### Maintenance of Specialist Certification (MOSC)

- new model that focuses on continued competency
- includes the following elements:
  1. Professional Standing and Direct Patient Care Hours
  2. Commitment to Life Long Learning through Professional Development
  3. Practice Performance through Examples of Patient Care and Clinical Reasoning
  4. Cognitive expertise through a Test of Knowledge in the Profession

### MOSC: Purpose

- More effectively verify current competence as an advanced practitioner in the specialty area
- More effectively evaluate professional development and clinical experience
- Better encourage ongoing education and professional growth
- Keep pace with the rapidly expanding specialty knowledge base and scientific evidence that guides clinical decision-making
- Promote improved health outcomes related to physical therapy specialty services

### MOSC: Timeline

- **Recertification Model**
  - prior to 2013
- **Transition Period**
  - started 2013
- **Full implementation projected 2016**
Maintenance of Specialist Certification

Certification Cycle

Year

3
6
9
10

Lifelong Learning & Professional Development
Licenseure & Professional Standing
Cognitive Expertise
Practice Performance & Clinical Care and Reasoning

MOSC

Board Certified Clinical Specialists

CCS, ECS, GCS, NCS, OCS, PCS, SCS, WCS

- Professionals with clinical expertise
- Advancing our profession
- Making a difference in the lives of our patients
- Consider setting your career path towards clinical excellence and specialization

For more information contact:

APTA
Department of Post-Professional Certification and Credentialing
1111 North Fairfax Street
Alexandria, VA 22314
800/999-2782, ext 8520
www.abpts.org

Literature about Specialization or Specialists

- Smith LC. The decision to specialize. PT Magazine. 2001;9(6):52-59
- Williams DO. Answering the bell: PTs & school sports. PT Magazine. 1996;4(12):36-39
- Ferrier MPB. One stage in professional evolution. Clinical Management. 1994;11(2):66-70