

Main Motion to the 2024 House of Delegates



Required for Adoption: Majority Vote

Category: ZO-8

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1 **PROPOSED BY: HAWAII**

2

3 **RC 22-24 CHARGE: SPECIAL COMMITTEE TO DEVELOP CONTEMPORARY**
4 **DEFINITION OF PHYSICAL THERAPY**

5

6 **That a special committee of the House of Delegates be created to develop a definition of “physical**
7 **therapy”. The definition shall be a contemporary description of physical therapy that describes the**
8 **profession’s rightful place in healthcare, and the breadth and depth of physical therapy. The definition**
9 **shall not be limiting and will be flexible to be relevant as the profession, health care, and research**
10 **change over time.**

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12 **The committee shall report to the House of Delegates in 2025.**

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14 **SS:**

15 **A. What is the expected outcome of this motion? How does it contribute to achieving the Vision?**
16 **Does it support APTA priorities (as reflected in the current [Strategic Plan](#)), and if so, how?**

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18 *Answer:* APTA will have a definition of physical therapy which reflects the profession’s role in United
19 States society. Currently there are many definitions of physical therapy which can be found online. It is fair
20 to say none of these definitions are optimal and many have negative implications. How you are defined is
21 what the world perceives of you. A lack of definition of physical therapy had impeded our advocacy efforts
22 and achieving our optimal potential to benefit society. If you do not define yourself others will define you.

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24 **B. How is this motion’s subject national in scope or importance?**

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26 *Answer:* See above

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28 **C. What previous or current activities of the House, Board, or staff address this topic? Who are the**
29 **stakeholders that might be affected by this motion (internal to APTA as well as relevant groups**
30 **external to APTA)? Are there any state or federal laws or regulations which also address this topic;**
31 **if so, what are they?**

32

33 *Answer:* In 2011 the following motion was adopted by the House. RC 21-11 RECOGNITION OF
34 PHYSICAL THERAPY AS A DISTINCT, SELF-DETERMINED PROFESSION That RC 21-11 Recognition
35 of Physical Therapy as a Distinct, Self-Determined Profession be adopted as written: That the American
36 Physical Therapy Association (APTA) advocate for physical therapy to be recognized as a distinct, self-
37 determined profession. Efforts should continue to include evaluating and pursuing, where appropriate,
38 opportunities to eliminate reference to the terms “allied,” “allied health,” “allied health profession,” “allied

1 health professional,” and “ancillary” when used in association with or classifying the profession of physical
2 therapy and the physical therapist, with a report to the 2012 House of Delegates.

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4 In 2012 the Board published a report which can be found here:

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6 2012 Archive: <https://communities.apta.org/p/do/sd/sid=372>

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8 2012 Handbook: <https://communities.apta.org/p/do/sd/sid=372&fid=923&req=direct>

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10 In the ensuing 12 years it does not appear there has been any change in the status of this issue.

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12 **D. Additional Background Information.**

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14 *Answer:* One benefit of defining physical therapy should be to elevate the status of the profession.
15 Eliminating the descriptors of “allied health” and “ancillary” in reference to physical therapy will allow for a
16 more accurate and contemporary appreciation of the profession.

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18 **E. How has this motion concept been disseminated, or how does the motion maker plan to**
19 **disseminate the concept to other delegates prior to the deadline for submission of main motions?**

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21 *Answer:* Posted on the Hub as a concept.