

**DIAGNOSIS BY PHYSICAL THERAPISTS HOD P06-12-10-09** [Amended HOD P06-08-06-07; HOD P06-97-06-19; HOD 06-95-12-07; HOD 06-94-22-35; Initial HOD 06-84-19-78] [Position]

Physical therapists shall establish a diagnosis for each patient/client.

Prior to making a patient/client management decision, physical therapists shall utilize the diagnostic process in order to establish a diagnosis for the specific conditions in need of the physical therapist's attention.

A diagnosis is a label encompassing a cluster of signs and symptoms commonly associated with a disorder or syndrome or category of impairments in body structures and function, activity limitations, or participation restrictions. It is the decision reached as a result of the diagnostic process, which is the evaluation of information obtained from the patient/client examination. The purpose of the diagnosis is to guide the physical therapist in determining the most appropriate intervention strategy for each patient/client. In the event the diagnostic process does not yield an identifiable cluster, disorder, syndrome, or category, intervention may be directed toward the alleviation of symptoms and remediation of impairments in body structures and function, activity limitations, or participation restrictions.

The physical therapist's responsibility in the diagnostic process is to organize and interpret all relevant information collected. The diagnostic process includes obtaining relevant history, performing systems review, and selecting and administering specific tests and measures.

When indicated, physical therapists order appropriate tests, including but not limited to imaging and other studies, that are performed and interpreted by other health professionals. Physical therapists may also perform or interpret selected imaging or other studies.

In performing the diagnostic process, physical therapists may need to obtain additional information (including diagnostic labels) from other health professionals. In addition, as the diagnostic process continues, physical therapists may identify findings that should be shared with other health professionals, including referral sources, to ensure optimal patient/client care. When the patient/client is referred with a previously established diagnosis, the physical therapist should determine that the clinical findings are consistent with that diagnosis. If the diagnostic process reveals findings that are outside the scope of the physical therapist's knowledge, experience, or expertise, the physical therapist should then refer the patient/client to an appropriate practitioner.

Relationship to Vision 2020: Autonomous Practice; (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