SUBSTANCE ABUSE HOD P06-03-22-19 [Initial HOD 06-93-25-49] [Position]

The American Physical Therapy Association (APTA) recognizes the responsibility of the profession to meet the physical therapy needs of society; to promote the well being of physical therapists, physical therapist assistants, and students; to uphold the ethical and legal responsibilities of the profession; and to follow the guidelines put forth in the APTA Board of Directors’ document Peer Assistance/Impaired Provider Program. Physical therapists, physical therapist assistants, and students shall address the problems associated with alcohol and substance abuse within the profession.

APTA recognizes that alcoholism and other chemical dependencies are treatable diseases. Therefore, it is the duty of the physical therapist, the physical therapist assistant, and students to help themselves and their colleagues acknowledge that health and professional roles are adversely affected by these impairments. Additionally, APTA believes that appropriate treatment should continue to be available for impaired physical therapy practitioners and their family members to facilitate re-entry of practitioners into the profession as accountable and reliable professionals. Re-entry should occur when the well being of the physical therapy practitioner and the patient/client are assured.

The practitioner’s entry into the recovery process should be confidential and should be instituted in a non-punitive manner. APTA seeks to create a supportive environment for impaired physical therapy practitioners in their recovery and thereby enhance the well being of its members and the profession.

APTA encourages chapters to advocate for the establishment of non-punitive programs for impaired practitioners.

Relationship to Vision 2020: Professionalism; (General Counsel, ext 3252)

[Document updated: 12/14/2009]

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.