



State of Louisiana
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HOSPITALS
Louisiana Physical Therapy Board

June 7, 2016

Dear Licensees,

On June 6, 2016 Senate Bill No. 291, amending the Louisiana Physical Therapy Practice Act found at La. R.S. 37:2418 *et seq.*, became law allowing patients direct access to physical therapy. This law is effective as of June 6, 2016. A summary of the changes in the law are as follows:

1. A physical therapist possessing a doctorate degree or five years of licensed clinical practice experience may implement physical therapy treatment without a prescription or referral;
2. A physical therapist treating a patient without a prescription or referral must refer the patient to an appropriate healthcare provider if, after thirty days of physical therapy treatment, the patient has not made measureable or functional improvement;
3. The new direct access provisions do not change the law as it related to Workers' Compensation as specified in La. R.S. 23:1142, monetary limits of health care provider approval; La. R.S. 23:1122, Worker's Compensation Medical Examinations; and La. R.S. 23:1203.1, Worker's Compensation Benefits;
4. No physical therapist shall render a medical diagnosis of disease.

While patient access to physical therapy has changed, the scope and practice of physical therapy remains the same.¹ Physical therapists conduct an initial physical therapy examination and render a physical therapy diagnosis treating only those conditions within the physical therapy scope of practice. In addition, a physical therapist remains responsible for managing all aspects of the physical therapy care of each patient.² A physical therapist must continue to practice within his/her individual scope of practice by exercising sound professional judgment based on his/her individual knowledge, skill set, education, training and experience, and only perform those procedures in which he/she is competent.³ If in practicing within his/her individual scope of practice the physical therapist finds that the treatment needed is outside his/her scope of knowledge, experience, or expertise, the physical therapist must notify the patient and appropriately refer to another healthcare provider.⁴ It is important to note that direct patient access does not impact payment procedure or guarantee payment from payor sources.

The Louisiana Physical Therapy Board wishes to make this transition to direct patient access as easy as possible. Please reference the Louisiana Physical Therapy Board website for the complete language of La. R.S. 37:2418 as amended. If you have any questions regarding the changes in the law, please contact the Louisiana Physical Therapy Board Office at 337-262-1043 or 888-400-9110.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Charlotte F. Martin".

Charlotte F. Martin, M.P.A.
Executive Director

1 La. R.S. 37:2407.

2 La. R.S. 37:2418 A and Louisiana Physical Therapy Board Rule § 303 B.

3 Louisiana Physical Therapy Board Rule § 303 C.

4 *Id.*