

Position Statement – NC Board of Physical Therapy Examiners

3. Direct Access

Posted – December 17, 2001

Revised – September 23, 2010 (Sentence added below), June 17, 2015

Reviewed- June 6, 2018

Question: Does North Carolina allow direct access (practice without the legal requirement of a physician's referral) and where can I find it in the NC PT Practice Act?

Answer: North Carolina has had direct access since 1985 when the Practice Act was revised by the NC General Assembly.

G.S. 90-270.24-90-270.39

PHYSICAL THERAPY PRACTICE ACT: NORTH CAROLINA

Effective: December 30, 1985

Article 18B Physical Therapy

90-270.24. Definitions.--In this Article, unless the context otherwise requires, the following definitions shall apply:

(4) "Physical therapy".....“Physical therapy does not include the application of roentgen rays or radioactive materials, surgery, manipulation of the spine unless prescribed by a physician licensed to practice medicine in North Carolina, or medical diagnosis of disease.”

90-270.35. Unlawful practice. - Except as otherwise authorized in this act, if any person, firm, or corporation shall:

(4) Practice physical therapy and fail to refer to a licensed medical doctor or dentist any patient whose medical condition should have, at the time of evaluation or treatment, been determined to be beyond the scope of practice of a physical therapist;

SENTENCE ADDED (September 23, 2010)

Therefore, a referral from anyone (including a chiropractor or podiatrist) who is not a licensed medical doctor or dentist is the same as direct access.

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