

Position Statement – North Carolina Board of Physical Therapy Examiners

6. Performance of Finger Blood Specimens

Adopted – December 28, 2001

Updated – December 6, 2006

Reviewed by the Board – September 23, 2010, June 17, 2015

Updated- June 6, 2018

Licensees are often asked to perform activities related to a patient's overall care that are not within the definition of physical therapy, nor are they precluded by the practice acts of other health care disciplines. Examples would include, but are not limited to, assessment of bowel sounds, urine specimens and finger sticks. Although such activities can be performed by a licensee, they should not be referred to or billed for as physical therapy.

In most cases, the interpretation of the results of such activities should be left to the person directing that such activities be performed on the patient.

The performance of fingerstick blood specimens for analysis of Pro-times is not considered part of the scope of practice for physical therapy; however, it would not be a violation of the **North Carolina Physical Therapy Practice Act** for a PT or PTA to do a fingerstick with a physician's order provided that the physical therapist has been properly trained and is competent, and makes it clear to the patient that this procedure is not physical therapy. When the PT or PTA performs a finger stick, the PT or PTA should communicate the results to a nurse so that the nurse can interpret and communicate the results to the physician to make medication modifications. (*See Board Position regarding the "Physical Therapist's Role in Recording Medications on OASIS Forms".*) In addition, the physical therapist cannot bill for his or her time as physical therapy. Lastly, the NCBPTE cannot speak for other Boards as to whether the performance of fingersticks would violate other practice acts. The NCBPTE can only say that it is not a violation of the **North Carolina Physical Therapy Practice Act**.

Kathy Arney, PT, MA, Executive Director
NC Board of Physical Therapy Examiners
8300 Health Park Suite 233
Raleigh, NC 27615
Phone: 1-919-490-6393 / 800-800-8982
Fax: 1-919-490-5106
Email: karney@ncptboard.org
Web: www.ncptboard.org