

Certifying Entities/Criteria for Approval - Treatment without Referral

During the 87th Legislative Session – 2021, HB 1363 amended Sec. 453.301, Occupations Code (PT Practice Act) to expand the group of physical therapists with a doctoral degree who qualify to provide physical therapy treatment to a patient for up to fifteen (15) consecutive business days before requiring a referral from a qualified healthcare practitioner. An alternative qualification to completion of a residency or fellowship is to be certified by an entity approved by the Board. Changes to the Act become effective September 1, 2021.

At its July meeting, the PT Board approved the following certifying entities and developed criteria for certifying entity approval.

Approved Certifying Entities

Certification by any of the following Board-approved entities qualifies a licensee who possess a doctoral degree in physical therapy to treat a patient for not more than 15 consecutive business days without a referral.

1. The American Board of Physical Therapy Specialties (ABPTS)
2. Hand Therapy Certification Commission (HTCC)
3. Board of Certification in Professional Ergonomics (BCPE)
4. American Board of Wound Management (ABWM)
5. National Alliance of Wound Care and Ostomy (NAWCO)
6. University of St. Augustine - Specialty Certification

Criteria for Certifying Entity Approval

The following criteria must be met in order for the PT Board to approve a certifying entity.

1. The certification must be clearly related to the practice of physical therapy.
2. The certification should address a specialty or subspecialty within physical therapy.
3. There must be minimum eligibility requirements for a person to become certified.
 - a. At least a bachelor's degree must be required for physical therapists; and
 - b. A minimum amount of clinical experience in the area of specialization must be required by the certifying entity.
4. Certification must be time-limited with a specified process of recertification that includes, but is not limited to,
 - a. A minimum amount of clinical experience after certification, and
 - b. Re-examination or continuing education.
5. Successful completion of an examination is part of the certification process.
 - a. The examination must meet the standards for assessment instruments as specified in the "Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing" (AERA, APA, NCME). [Note: Accreditation through the NCCA requires compliance with these standards.]
 - b. The examination must be proctored and offered in a secure environment.

Requests for Board consideration of a certifying entity to be added to the approved list can be directed to emailpt@ptot.texas.gov. Please include support documentation for each of the above criteria.