On June 14, 2019, Governor Greg Abbott signed HB 29 which has an effective date of September 1, 2019.

HB 29 amends provisions of Section 453.301, Occupations Code (PT Practice Act) that includes treatment without a referral for not more than ten (10) consecutive business days for a physical therapist (PT) who possesses a doctoral degree in physical therapy or who has completed a minimum of thirty (30) continuing competence activities in the area of differential diagnosis.

Additionally, a PT with a doctoral degree in physical therapy who has completed a residency or fellowship can treat for not more than fifteen (15) consecutive business days without a referral.

Stipulations on treatment without a referral are the PT must have been licensed to practice physical therapy for at least one (1) year and must be covered by professional liability insurance. Before treatment can exceed the authorized number of days, a referral must be obtained from a qualified healthcare practitioner.

A PT, regardless of entry-level degree, who has been licensed to practice for at least one (1) year will no longer be authorized to treat an established patient under a prior referral for thirty (30) days or twenty (20) visits effective September 1, 2019.

Current provisions in the PT Practice Act/Rules regarding referral remain in effect until September 1, 2019.

A PT who treats without a referral must obtain a signed disclosure from the patient beginning November 1, 2019. A disclosure form will be available on the PT Board’s website, www.ptot.texas.gov, at that time.

The Rules & Practice Committee of the Texas Board of Physical Therapy Examiners (PT Board) will meet in July to discuss and recommend amendments to PT Rules §322.1. (a) in order to clarify and implement the provisions of HB 29. The full PT Board will then vote to propose the amendments. Any amendments that are proposed will not be in effect until final adoption by the PT Board.

Please hold all of your questions until after the PT Board has met. Updates will be disseminated via the email list and will be posted on the website at www.ptot.texas.gov.

Following is a timeline for the implementation of HB 29.
HB 29 – Amendment to Section 453.301, Occupations Code

June 14, 2019
HB 29 Signed into law by Governor Abbott
- Effective date of amendment to PT Practice Act Section 453.301 - September 1, 2019.
- Current provisions in PT Practice Act/Rules regarding referral still in effect until September 1, 2019.

July 18, 2019
TBPTE Rules & Practice Committee Meeting
- Agenda item - Discussion and possible action on amending PT Rules §322.1.(a) pursuant to HB 29 amendments to Sec. 453.301, Occupations Code during the 86th Legislative Session.

July 19, 2019
TX Board of Physical Therapy Examiners Meeting
- Recommendation from Rules & Practice Committee to propose amendment to PT Rules §322.1. (a) to implement provisions of HB 29.
- Proposed Rules amendment to be published in upcoming edition of Texas Register for public comment. (Date TBA)

September 1, 2019
Amendment to PT Practice Act becomes effective
- PT with doctoral degree in physical therapy can treat a patient for 10 consecutive business days without a referral.
- PT who has completed at least 30 hrs. of continuing competence activities in differential diagnosis can treat a patient for 10 consecutive business days without a referral.
- PT with doctoral degree in physical therapy who has completed a residency or fellowship can treat a patient for 15 consecutive business days.
- All of the above must have been licensed to practice for at least one year and be covered by professional liability insurance.
- Treatment exceeding authorized number of days must have referral.
- PT can no longer treat an established patient under a prior referral for 30 days or 20 visits.
- Provisions in proposed Rules amendment not in effect until final adoption.

October 11, 2019
TX Board of Physical Therapy Examiners Meeting
- Final adoption of amendment to PT Rules §322.1.(a).
- Adopted Rules amendment to be published in upcoming edition of Texas Register. (Date TBA)

November 1, 2019
PT Rules Amendment Becomes Effective.
- All provisions of adopted Rules amendment become effective including amount of professional liability insurance coverage and signed disclosure requirements.
- Disclosure form available on Board’s website at www.ptot.texas.gov.