

WAC 246-915-181 Supervision responsibilities. A physical therapist is professionally and legally responsible for patient care given by assistive personnel under his or her supervision. If a physical therapist fails to adequately supervise patient care given by assistive personnel, the board may take disciplinary action against the physical therapist.

(1) Regardless of the setting in which physical therapy services are provided, only the licensed physical therapist may perform the following responsibilities:

(a) Interpretation of referrals;

(b) Initial examination, problem identification, and diagnosis for physical therapy;

(c) Development or modification of a plan of care that is based on the initial examination and includes the goals for physical therapy intervention;

(d) Determination of which tasks require the expertise and decision-making capacity of the physical therapist and shall be personally rendered by the physical therapist, and which tasks may be delegated;

(e) Assurance of the qualifications of all assistive personnel to perform assigned tasks through written documentation of their education or training that is maintained and available at all times;

(f) Delegation and instruction of the services to be rendered by the physical therapist, physical therapist assistant, or physical therapy aide including, but not limited to, specific tasks or procedures, precautions, special problems, and contraindicated procedures;

(g) Timely review of documentation, reexamination of the patient, and revision of the plan of care when indicated;

(h) Establishment of a discharge plan.

(2) Supervision requires that the patient reevaluation is performed:

(a) Every fifth visit, or if treatment is performed more than five times per week, reevaluation must be performed at least once a week;

(b) When there is any change in the patient's condition not consistent with planned progress or treatment goals.

(3) Patient reexamination means the licensed physical therapist shall physically observe and interview the patient and reexamine the patient as necessary during an episode of care to evaluate progress or change in patient status and modify the plan of care accordingly or discontinue physical therapy services.

(4) For patient reevaluations the licensed physical therapist shall at a minimum visually see the patient.

(5) Supervision of assistive personnel means:

(a) Physical therapist assistants may function under direct or indirect supervision;

(b) Physical therapy aides shall function under direct supervision;

(c) The physical therapist may supervise a total of two assistive personnel at any one time;

(d) In addition to the two assistive personnel authorized in (c) of this subsection, the physical therapist may supervise a total of two persons who are pursuing a course of study leading to a degree as a physical therapist or a physical therapist assistant.

[Statutory Authority: RCW 18.74.023 and chapter 18.74 RCW, RCW 18.340.020. WSR 18-15-067, § 246-915-181, filed 7/17/18, effective 8/17/18.]