

SB173 INTRODUCED



1 SB173
2 G5IN22C-1
3 By Senator Shelnuttt
4 RFD: Healthcare
5 First Read: 28-Feb-24



SYNOPSIS:

The Physical Therapy Practice Act defines the scope of practice of physical therapists licensed in Alabama.

This bill would allow licensed physical therapists to conduct initial screenings of patients.

This bill would eliminate the requirement that physical therapy be practiced only upon a referral from a licensed physician, licensed dentist, licensed chiropractor, licensed physician assistant, or licensed certified registered nurse practitioner.

A BILL
TO BE ENTITLED
AN ACT

Relating to the practice of physical therapy; to amend Sections 34-24-191 and 34-24-210.1, Code of Alabama 1975, to allow licensed physical therapists to conduct initial screenings of patients and to eliminate the requirement that physical therapy be practiced only upon a referral from a licensed physician, licensed dentist, licensed chiropractor, licensed physician assistant, or licensed certified registered nurse practitioner.



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BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF ALABAMA:

Section 1. Section 34-24-191, Code of Alabama 1975, is amended to read as follows:

"§34-24-191

(a) For the purposes of this article, the following ~~words and phrases shall~~ terms have the following meanings ~~respectively ascribed by this section:~~

(1) BOARD. The Board of Physical Therapy established by Section 34-24-192.

(2) COMMISSION. The Physical Therapy Compact Commission, the national administrative body whose membership consists of all states that have enacted the interstate compact.

(3) COMPACT PRIVILEGE. The authorization granted by a remote state to allow a licensee from another state to practice as a physical therapist or work as a physical therapist assistant in the remote state under its laws and rules. The practice of physical therapy occurs in the state where the patient/client is located at the time of the patient/client encounter.

(4) COMPACT PRIVILEGE HOLDER. An individual licensed as a physical therapist or physical therapist assistant in a compact state who has been granted a compact privilege by the commission.

(5) FOREIGN EDUCATED PHYSICAL THERAPIST. A person trained or educated in the practice of physical therapy outside of the United States or any of its territorial possessions.



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(6) IMPAIRED. The inability of a physical therapy licensee to practice physical therapy with reasonable skill and safety to patients by reason of illness, inebriation, excessive use of drugs, narcotics, alcohol, chemicals, or other substances, or as a result of any physical or mental condition.

(7) PHYSICAL THERAPIST. A person who practices physical therapy.

(8) PHYSICAL THERAPIST ASSISTANT. A person who assists in the practice of physical therapy and whose activities require an understanding of physical therapy but do not require professional or advanced training in the anatomical, biological, and physical sciences involved in the practice of physical therapy. The physical therapist assistant shall practice only under the direction of a licensed physical therapist.

(9) PHYSICAL THERAPY. The treatment of a human being by the use of exercise, massage, heat, cold, water, radiant energy, electricity, or sound for the purpose of correcting or alleviating any physical or mental condition or preventing the development of any physical or mental disability, or the performance of neuromuscular-skeletal tests and measurements to determine the existence and extent of body malfunction; ~~provided, that physical therapy shall be practiced only upon the referral of a physician licensed to practice medicine or surgery, a dentist licensed to practice dentistry, a licensed chiropractor, a licensed assistant to a physician acting pursuant to a valid supervisory agreement, or a licensed~~



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~~certified registered nurse practitioner in a collaborative practice agreement with a licensed physician, except as otherwise provided in this chapter.~~ Physical therapy does not include radiology or electrosurgery.

(10) PHYSICAL THERAPY AIDE. A person trained under the direction of a physical therapist who performs designated and supervised routine tasks related to physical therapy services.

(11) PHYSICAL THERAPY LICENSEE. A physical therapist or physical therapist assistant who is licensed under this article.

(12) PHYSIOTHERAPIST. Synonymous with the term "physical therapist," and the term shall be used to identify only those persons licensed under this article. The physical therapist may use the letters "P.T." or "R.P.T." in connection with his or her name or place of business to denote his or her registration hereunder.

(13) RESTRICTED LICENSE.

a. For a physical therapist, a license on which the board has placed restrictions or conditions, or both, as to the scope of practice, place of practice, supervision of practice, duration of licensed status, or type or condition of patient to whom the physical therapist may provide services.

b. For a physical therapist assistant, a license on which the board has placed any restriction.

(b) Words importing the masculine gender shall include the feminine."

Section 2. Section 34-24-210.1, Code of Alabama 1975,
is amended to read as follows:



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"§34-24-210.1

~~(a) Without prescription or referral, a licensed physical therapist or compact privilege holder may perform an initial evaluation or consultation of a screening nature to determine the need for physical therapy and may perform the physical therapy and other services provided in subdivisions (b) (1) through (5). Implementation of physical therapy shall otherwise be based on the referral of a person licensed to practice medicine, surgery, dentistry, chiropractic, licensed assistant to a physician acting pursuant to a valid supervising agreement, or a licensed certified registered nurse practitioner in a valid collaborative practice agreement with a licensed physician.~~

~~(b) The physical therapy and other services referred to in subsection (a), which may be performed without prescription or referral, include and are limited to the following:~~

~~(1) To a child with a diagnosed developmental disability pursuant to the plan of care for the child.~~

~~(2) To a patient of a home health care agency pursuant to the plan of care for the patient.~~

~~(3) To a patient in a nursing home pursuant to the plan of care for the patient.~~

~~(4) Related to conditioning or to providing education or activities in a wellness setting for the purpose of injury prevention, reduction of stress, or promotion of fitness.~~

~~(5) To an individual for a previously diagnosed condition or conditions for which physical therapy services are appropriate after informing the health care provider~~



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~~rendering the diagnosis. The diagnosis shall have been made within the immediately preceding 90 days. The physical therapist shall provide the health care provider who rendered the diagnosis with a plan of care for physical therapy services within the first 15 days of physical therapy intervention.~~ A licensed physical therapist may perform an initial evaluation or consultation of a screening nature to determine the need for physical therapy, establish a plan of care, and initiate physical therapy services as appropriate. The physical therapist shall refer patients to other providers as needed. If a referral is received, a plan of care will be sent to the referring provider."

Section 3. This act shall become effective on October 1, 2024.