



American Kinesiotherapy Association

118 College Drive #5142

Hattiesburg, MS 39406

www.akta.org

Tuesday, May 31, 2016

Mr. Ken Levine
Director
Sunset Advisory Commission
P.O. Box 13066
Austin, TX 78711-3066

Dear Mr. Levine,

The purpose of this letter is to provide comment to this committee and recommendations regarding the definition of physical therapy in the Texas Physical Therapy Act.

Currently the Texas Physical Therapy Practice Act states that a “Physical therapist” *is a person who is licensed by the board as a physical therapist and practices physical therapy. The term includes a hydrotherapist, physiotherapist, mechano-therapist, functional therapist, physical therapy practitioner, physical therapist specialist, physical therapy specialist, physiotherapy practitioner, **kinesiotherapist**, physical specialist, and myofunctional therapist.*

Kinesiotherapist is not a term equivalent to Physical Therapist. Kinesiotherapists, formerly Corrective Therapists, have been a vital component of the Department of Veterans Affairs physical medicine and rehabilitation program for more than 70 years, and are listed in the healthcare provider taxonomy (code #226300000X). The Department of Labor describes a Kinesiotherapist as an Exercise Physiologist and not a Physical Therapist (<http://www.bls.gov/soc/2010/soc291128.htm>). In addition, the American Medical Association lists Kinesiotherapists in the Health Care Careers Directory as an allied health discipline and not under the Physical Therapy heading. Kinesiotherapists are the original exercise specialists, using only exercise and education to enhance the strength, endurance, and mobility of individuals with functional limitations or those requiring extended physical conditioning.

The Sunset Review from October 1992 had already previously stated that “Article 4512e, Section 6 of the Texas Physical Therapy Act exempts certain other healthcare professionals from licensing requirements. The exemptions include licensees of another state agency performing healthcare services within the scope of the applicable licensing act; occupational therapists who confine their practice to occupational therapy; certified corrective therapists who confine their practice to corrective therapy...” Kinesiotherapist are not representing themselves as Physical Therapists and are not claiming to perform physical therapy. The Texas Physical Therapy Practice Act didn’t incorporate the name change for the kinesiotherapy discipline from corrective therapy. In 1987 the name corrective therapy was officially changed to kinesiotherapy in an effort to create a clearer identity of our profession and to more effectively define our scope of practice. The Veterans Administration (VA) system has a separate job classification series and qualification standard for corrective therapist/kinesiotherapist, and they are still used interchangeably within VA Human Resources.

In 1996, The Texas Kinesiotherapy Association was unsuccessful in having the term kinesiotherapist removed from the Physical Therapy Act. The Texas Physical Therapy Association argued against removing the term kinesiotherapist, citing that the removal of the term would essentially leave the profession of kinesiotherapy unregulated. When the Texas Department of Health agreed to register the profession of kinesiotherapy, the Texas Physical Therapy association argued that that the profession of kinesiotherapy was already regulated under the physical therapy act. An Attorney General Opinion was sought by the Department of Health and the opinion concluded that the Texas Department of Health had no authority to register kinesiotherapists because such persons are already subject to licensing by the Board of Physical Therapy Examiners (Letter Opinion No 96-103). A second opinion was requested with the same result (Letter Opinion No 98-019).

The Council on Professional Standards for Kinesiotherapy (COPSKT) understands the need to ensure that educational and professional standards are met to ensure public safety. Since the initial inception of kinesiotherapy, in the midst of World War II, the requisite didactic preparations and clinical skill applications have evolved into a cohesive baccalaureate degree program based on a specific competency-based curriculum. Since 1998, all kinesiotherapy education programs have been approved by the Commission on Accreditation of Allied Health Education Programs (CAAHEP). All who graduate from an accredited kinesiotherapy program must pass the psychometrically balanced registration exam administered by a professional examination service and provide annual continuing education in order to be regarded as a valid practitioner in good standing. Those that pass the registration exam become Registered Kinesiotherapists and are then qualified to use the registered mark (Registration Number 2718287), RKT.

The American Kinesiotherapy Association and the Council on Professional Standards requests that the term kinesiotherapy be removed from the definition of a Physical Therapist as part of the Sunset Review. Kinesiotherapists, like many other exercise professionals have a skill set that is well suited to serve the needs of the general population, most specifically those aging individuals who are at risk of losing their functional independence as a result of age-related muscle loss and associated co-morbidities. The scope of practice of a kinesiotherapist only includes exercise as a primary means of rehabilitation, therefore if you regulate kinesiotherapists, this board would also need to regulate all other exercise professionals including: personal trainers, exercise physiologists, yoga therapists, health coaches, strength coach, physical education teacher, group exercise instructors, and others.

Thank you for your consideration,

Cynthia Howell
President American Kinesiotherapy Association
118 College Drive #5142
Hattiesburg, MS 39406