



American Kinesiotherapy Association

118 College Drive #5142

Hattiesburg, MS 39406

www.akta.org

Tuesday, May 03, 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.

Your Comments About the Staff Report, Including Recommendations Supported or Opposed:

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.*

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). Kinesiotherapists are the original exercise specialists, and have a long history of serving throughout the physical medicine and rehabilitation service of the Department of Veterans Affairs. Kinesiotherapy is the application of scientifically based exercise principles adapted to enhance the strength, endurance, and mobility of individuals with functional limitations or those requiring extended physical conditioning.

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 current Executive Summary as outlined by Erick Fajardo states that *“with the understanding of the lower risk associated with the practice of physical and occupational therapy, regulation needs to be tailored to reflect what is needed to protect the public. Licensing agencies must ensure that policies and processes for licensing only relate to the ability to do the work safely and do not impose unnecessary barriers to entry”*.

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.

Any Alternative or New Recommendations on This Agency:

Given the broad definition of physical therapist defined in the Texas Physical Therapy Act, 1993, and the fact that this act has not been reviewed for 23 years, the Council on Professional Standards for Kinesiotherapy along with the American Kinesiotherapy Association requests that the term kinesiotherapist be removed from the definition of a Physical Therapist as part of the Sunset Review. The argument that the Texas Physical Therapy Act regulates the profession of kinesiotherapy is misleading. Fundamentally the definition establishes a monopoly, limiting the ability of professions, other than physical therapists, to treat with and recommend physical exercise.

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, ect.

Thank you for your consideration,

Melissa Ziegler, MA, FMFA, RKT
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