

WCPT develops resource about the global state of the profession

Two major new projects reinforce WCPT's role as a focal point for information about the profession internationally. The confederation will be collecting data providing a snapshot of physical therapy around the world, and compiling a register of experts in particular professional areas.

WCPT will be contacting all its member organisations early next year to gather information about the practice, education and regulation of the profession in their country. Having this "common data set" easily available will help WCPT represent the profession internationally, provide support to its member organisations, and provide vital information to organisations like the World Health Organization.

WCPT has now set up a data advisory group, consisting of physical therapists known for their expertise on data. This is providing its input on the most feasible ways to collect the information, how to define the information needed in questionnaires, and how to ensure there is consistency in the information provided from country to country. WCPT will then build an online system to capture this data, and member organisations and other bodies will be asked to start contributing information into the system at the start of next year.

"The common data set will be an extremely important resource for helping WCPT represent its member organisations and their concerns to national governments and world bodies," says Catherine Sykes, WCPT's Professional Policy Consultant.

"For example, it will help us identify areas underserved by physical therapists, if we collect information on how many of us there are, where we're working, how our scope of practice differs, how many work in the public sector and so on. Governments really expect physical therapy organisations, and WCPT in particular, to have this kind of information. It's particularly important when we want to address workforce issues, and will influence the way WCPT and member organisations can advocate, for example, on obtaining more places on education programmes for physical therapists."

"Knowing which countries have a system of regulation, and of what type, will also be useful in our attempts to help member organisations move towards regulation."

In parallel to this project, WCPT is also beginning work on a register of experts in particular areas of physical therapy. It will be calling for individual experts to put forward their names so that WCPT can put them in touch with member organisations and projects which may be in special need of their skills and knowledge. Member organisations, subgroups and regions will also be asked to put forward names of people who may be able to share their expertise with others around the world.

"Having such a register of experts will help member organisations identify

WCPT NEWS

July 2009

people who might be able to work with them,” says WCPT Secretary General Brenda Myers. “We want to be able to draw on people who are happy to be a resource for those around the world trying to develop practice, education and services. We hope this will strengthen the profession, nationally as well as internationally.”



WCPT NEWS

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