



# Declaration of Principle

## Ethical Principles\*

The World Confederation for Physical Therapy (WCPT) expects physical therapists to:

1. Respect the rights and dignity of all individuals
2. Comply with the laws and regulations governing the practice of physical therapy in the country in which they practice
3. Accept responsibility for the exercise of sound judgement
4. Provide honest, competent and accountable professional services
5. Provide quality services
6. Be entitled to a just and fair level of remuneration for their services
7. Provide accurate information to patients/clients<sup>1</sup>, to other agencies and the community about physical therapy and the services physical therapists provide
8. Contribute to the planning and development of services which address the health needs of the community

*\*Appendix follows on page 3*

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<sup>1</sup> The term patient/client is used in this document as a generic term to refer to individuals and groups of individuals who can benefit from physical therapy interventions/treatments.

### **WCPT Secretariat**

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Related WCPT Policies:	<p>Declaration of Principle: Patients'/clients' rights in physical therapy</p> <p>Endorsement: Rights of the child</p> <p>Endorsement: The United Nations Standard Rules on the equalisation of opportunities for persons with disabilities</p>

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## **Appendix to: WCPT Declaration of Principle on Ethical Principles**

### **Responsibilities of WCPT and its Member Organisations**

Member organisations have a duty to publish, promote and circulate their code of ethics or code of conduct for the benefit of their members, the general public, employers, governments and government agencies.

Member organisations have appropriate procedures for monitoring the practice of their members, disciplinary procedures and sanctions for members whose practice falls outside their code of ethics or code of conduct.

The WCPT will assist national physical therapy organisations with the development of their own code of ethics or code of conduct.

### **Interpreting WCPT's Ethical Principles**

The following is intended to assist WCPT member organisations and individual physical therapists in interpreting WCPT's Ethical Principles. The information may be useful background for organisations developing their own codes of ethics or guides to ethical conduct which are consistent with WCPT's Ethical Principles and reflect national circumstances.

### **Ethical Principle 1: Physical therapists respect the rights and dignity of all individuals**

All persons who seek the services of physical therapists have the right to service regardless of age, gender, race, nationality, religion, ethnic origin, creed, colour, sexual orientation, disability, health status or politics.

Patients/clients have the right to:

- services of good quality
- information
- informed consent
- confidentiality
- access to data
- health education
- choose who, if anyone, should be informed on his/her behalf

Physical therapists have the absolute responsibility to ensure that their behaviour is at all times professional, ensuring that the potential for misconduct can not arise.

Physical therapists have the right to expect co-operation from their colleagues.

Physical therapists shall apply sound business principles when dealing with suppliers, manufacturers and other agents.

**Ethical Principle 2: Physical therapists comply with the laws and regulations governing the practice of physical therapy in the country in which they work**

Physical therapists will have a full understanding of the laws and regulations governing the practice of physical therapy.

Physical therapists have the right to refuse to treat or otherwise intervene when in their opinion the service is not in the best interests of the patient/client.

**Ethical Principle 3: Physical therapists accept responsibility for the exercise of sound judgement**

Physical therapists are professionally independent and autonomous practitioners.

Physical therapists make independent judgements in the provision of services for which they have knowledge and skills and for which they can be held accountable.

For each individual accepted for service, physical therapists undertake appropriate examination/evaluation to allow the development of a diagnosis.

In light of the diagnosis and other relevant information about the patient/client, especially the patient's/client's goals, physical therapists plan and implement the intervention.

When the goals have been achieved or further benefits can no longer be obtained, the physical therapist shall inform and discharge the patient/client.

When the diagnosis is not clear or the required intervention/treatment is beyond the capacity of the physical therapist, the physical therapist shall inform the patient/client and provide assistance to facilitate a referral to other qualified persons.

Physical therapists shall not delegate any activity which requires the unique skill, knowledge and judgement of the physical therapist.

The physical therapist will consult with the referring medical practitioner if the treatment programme or a continuation of the programme are not in accord with the judgement of the physical therapist.

**Ethical Principle 4: Physical therapists provide an honest, competent and accountable professional service**

Physical therapists ensure patients/clients understand the nature of the service being provided, especially the anticipated costs, both time and financial.

Physical therapists undertake a continuous, planned, personal development programme designed to maintain and enhance professional knowledge and skills.

Physical therapists maintain adequate patient/client records to allow for the effective evaluation of the patient's/client's care, as well as the evaluation of the physical therapist's practice.

Physical therapists do not disclose any information about a patient/client to a third party without the patient's/client's permission or prior knowledge, unless such disclosure is required by law.

Physical therapists participate in peer review and other forms of practice evaluation, the results of which shall not be disclosed to another party without the permission of the physical therapist.

Physical therapists shall maintain adequate data to facilitate service performance measurement and shall make that data available to other agents as required by mutual agreement.

The ethical principles governing the practice of physical therapy shall take precedence over any business or employment practice, where such conflict arises the physical therapist shall attempt to rectify the matter, seeking the assistance of the national physical therapy association if required.

Physical therapists shall not allow their services to be misused.

#### **Ethical Principle 5: Physical therapists are committed to providing quality services**

Physical therapists shall be aware of the currently accepted standards of practice and undertake activities which measure their conformity.

Physical therapists shall participate in ongoing education to enhance their basic knowledge and to provide new knowledge.

Physical therapists shall support research that contributes to improved patient/client services.

Physical therapists shall support quality education in academic and clinical settings.

Physical therapists engaged in research shall abide by the current rules and policies applying to the conduct of research on human subjects shall ensure:

- the consent of subjects
- subject confidentiality
- safety and well-being of subjects
- absence of fraud and plagiarism
- full disclosure of support, and
- appropriate acknowledgement of assistance
- that any breaches of the rules are reported to appropriate authorities

Physical therapists shall share the results of their research freely, especially in journals and conference presentations.

Physical therapists in the role of employer shall:

- ensure all employees are properly and duly qualified, ensuring compliance with statutory requirements

- apply current management principles and practices to the conduct of the service, with particular attention to appropriate standards of personnel management
- ensure implementation and monitoring of appropriate policies and procedures
- ensures appropriate evaluation and audit of clinical practice
- provide adequate opportunities for staff education and personal development based on effective performance appraisal

**Ethical Principle 6: Physical therapists are entitled to a just and fair level of remuneration for their services**

Physical therapists should ensure that their own fee schedules are based on reasonable considerations.

Physical therapists should attempt to ensure that third-party fee schedules are based on reasonable considerations.

Physical therapists shall not use undue influence for personal gain.

**Ethical Principle 7: Physical therapists provide accurate information to patients/clients, other agencies and the community about physical therapy and about the services physical therapists provide**

Physical therapists shall participate in public education programmes, providing information about the profession.

Physical therapists have a duty to inform the public and referring professionals truthfully about the nature of their service so individuals are more able to make a decision about the use of the service.

Physical therapists may advertise their services;.

Physical therapists shall not use false, fraudulent, misleading, deceptive, unfair or sensational statements or claims.

Physical therapists shall claim only those titles which correctly describe their professional status.

**Ethical Principle 8: Physical therapists contribute to the planning and development of services which address the health needs of the community**

Physical therapists have a duty and an obligation to participate in planning services designed to provide optimum community health services.

Physical therapists are obliged to work toward achieving justice in the provision of health services for all people.