

WCPT policy statement: Health human resources

The World Confederation for Physical Therapy (WCPT) advocates for appropriate planning, management and development of health human resources. These are fundamental to the provision of patient/client-centred, equitable and responsive health services. An adequately resourced, competent and motivated workforce is essential to strengthening the health of each nation.

WCPT recognises that health human resource planning, management and development is complex. It is driven by various political, economic, cultural, historical and organisational influences, and multiple stakeholders (eg consumers, professionals, service providers, service funders, educators, researchers, policy makers, governments) need to be involved.

WCPT advocates that the following principles should inform effective health human resource planning, management and development and encourages its member organisations to apply them.

- Services should be patient/client-centred.
- Services should be based on population priorities and needs assessment.
- Services should be culturally sensitive.
- Strategies should be sensitive to economic constraints.
- Strategies should provide integrated services across professions, disciplines and localities.
- Reliable data sources should be used to inform decisions.
- Equitable access should be assured to sustainable high quality physical therapy services.
- The scope of practice and services should be clearly defined.
- Professional entry level physical therapy education should prepare physical therapists for the needs of the workplace.
- Employed staff should have the relevant competencies to match the requirements of the position.
- Best practice is promoted by having positive practice environments ¹ which provide:
 - support for continuing professional development and lifelong learning
 - recruitment and retention strategies
 - terms and conditions of employment
 - support for the growth of professional leaders
 - procedures for risk assessment and risk management
 - policy and monitoring systems to ensure access to accurate data, design, implementation and evaluation of intervention strategies
 - practice environments that are free of intimidation, violence, sexual harassment and bullying
 - appropriate staffing levels (numbers and mix of personnel)
 - policies for physical therapists practising alone as sole practitioners or in rural, remote or isolated practice environments ²

- A sustainable physical therapy workforce is strengthened and supported by a professional organisation, high standards of professional education and licensure/regulation/recognition consistent with international guidelines. ³⁻⁶
- Health human resources should be continually evaluated and reviewed.

WCPT strongly supports the involvement of member organisations in the development of any national health human resource planning, management and development strategies. WCPT encourages its member organisations to:

- work with national government health departments and regional and national organisations to ensure appropriate short- and long-term sustainable health human resource planning, management and development
- support the World Health Organization's Global Code of Practice on the International Recruitment of Health Personnel ⁷
- identify the issues that inform, and have an impact on, the supply and demand of health personnel within the health services of their country and region
- contribute to national dialogue on the role of physical therapy in optimising the health of individuals and populations through health promotion, disease prevention, examination/assessment, evaluation, interventions/treatment (including rehabilitation) and re-examination
- contribute to national dialogue on the resource implications for delivering physical therapy services
- be familiar with the body of research that informs evidence-based health human resource planning, management and development
- ensure that they have access to appropriate data for the planning, management and development of health human resources in physical therapy and are able to analyse and use it to inform discussions and decisions
- play a leadership role in discussing physical therapy human resources and promoting long-term sustainability of service provision
- capitalise on national policy changes and other opportunities to review services and health human resource models and seek innovation in service provision
- support research efforts in health service and physical therapy management fields

Glossary

Health human resources — health workers are people engaged in actions whose primary intent is to enhance health. These workers include those who promote and preserve health as well as those who diagnose and treat disease (eg doctors, laboratory technicians, midwives, nurses, pharmacists, physical therapists) as well as management and support workers, those who help make the health system function but who do not provide health services directly (eg cleaners, cooks, drivers, financial officers and hospital managers). ⁸

Positive practice environments (PPE) — are “cost-effective health care settings that support excellence and decent work, have the power to attract and retain staff and to improve patient satisfaction, safety and outcomes.” Characteristically such settings:

1. ensure the health, safety and well-being of staff;
2. support quality patient care;
3. improve the motivation, productivity and performance of individuals and organisations.⁹

Approval, review and related policy information	
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Date for review:	2019
Related WCPT policies:	WCPT ethical principles WCPT policy statements: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ethical responsibilities of physical therapists and WCPT members • Occupational health and safety for physical therapists • Reciprocity – mutual recognition • Regulation of the physical therapy profession • Support personnel in physical therapy practice

References

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4. World Confederation for Physical Therapy. WCPT guideline for a standard evaluation process for accreditation/recognition of physical therapist professional entry level education programmes. London, UK: WCPT; 2011. www.wcpt.org/guidelines/accreditation (Access date 22nd September 2011)
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