

## Infection prevention and control

The World Confederation for Physical Therapy (WCPT) advocates that infection prevention and control is the responsibility of all those involved in health services delivery and should be embedded into everyday practice. This relates to health service acquired infections and those that result from other sources, not just those that are considered high-risk infectious diseases. Early diagnosis, along with strategies to manage and contain infections, is essential for the wellbeing of patients/clients and all health professionals.

WCPT encourages its member organisations to ensure that:

- physical therapists familiarise themselves with the standards for infection prevention and control at the facility in which they practise and also the standards recommended by their national/provincial/state/local health departments
- physical therapists implement best practice in infection prevention and control in any practice setting
- employers and physical therapists have access to relevant and current information on infection prevention and control
- physical therapists are familiar with the International Health Regulations (IHR) <sup>1</sup> as they relate to infectious diseases
- physical therapists have a safe work environment that provides:
  - guidelines and policies on infection prevention and control
  - appropriate protection (eg vaccinations, equipment and supplies)
  - training to support awareness and good practice in infection prevention and control
  - mechanisms to monitor and review infection prevention and control procedures
  - appropriate care of physical therapists affected as a result of infection or as a consequence of dealing with infections and environments in the practice setting
  - protection from discrimination if they are infected

WCPT member organisations are urged to support national efforts to build, strengthen and maintain the capacities required under the IHR – to prevent, protect against, control and provide public health responses to the international spread of disease and to advocate for the role of physical therapists in the amelioration of the effects of such diseases.

### Glossary

**Infectious diseases** — “are caused by pathogenic microorganisms, such as bacteria, viruses, parasites or fungi; the diseases can be spread, directly or indirectly, from one person to another. Zoonotic diseases are infectious diseases of animals that can cause disease when transmitted to humans.” <sup>2</sup>

**Wellbeing** — “a positive physical, social and mental state; it is not just the absence of pain, discomfort and incapacity. It requires that basic needs are met, that individuals have a sense of purpose, that they feel able to achieve important personal goals and participate in society. It is enhanced by conditions that include supportive personal relationships, strong and inclusive

communities, good health, financial and personal security, rewarding employment, and a healthy and attractive environment.”<sup>3</sup>

<b>Approval, review and related policy information</b>	
<b>Date adopted:</b>	Originally approved as a Position statement: High risk infectious diseases, at the 13 <sup>th</sup> General Meeting of WCPT, June 1995. Revised and re-approved at the 16 <sup>th</sup> General Meeting of WCPT June 2007. Policy statement approved at the 17 <sup>th</sup> General Meeting of WCPT June 2011. Revised and re-approved at the 18 <sup>th</sup> General Meeting of WCPT May 2015.
<b>Date for review:</b>	2019
<b>Related WCPT policies:</b>	WCPT policy statements: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Description of physical therapy</li> <li>• Occupational health and safety for physical therapists</li> </ul>

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## References

1. World Health Organization. International Health Regulations 2005 2nd Edition. Geneva, Switzerland.: WHO; 2008. [www.who.int/ihr/9789241596664/en/index.html](http://www.who.int/ihr/9789241596664/en/index.html) (Access date 15th November 2010)
2. World Health Organization. Health topics: Infectious diseases. Geneva, Switzerland: WHO; 2011. [http://www.who.int/topics/infectious\\_diseases/en/](http://www.who.int/topics/infectious_diseases/en/) (Access date 15th November 2010)
3. Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs. Measuring Progress: Sustainable Development Indicators 2010. London, UK.; 2010. [http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20140827110041/http://sd.defra.gov.uk/documents/SDI2010\\_001.pdf](http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20140827110041/http://sd.defra.gov.uk/documents/SDI2010_001.pdf) (Access date 10th March 2017)

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