
Kentucky State Board of Physical Therapy

9110 Leesgate Road, Suite 6

Louisville, KY 40222-5159

502/327-8497

Fax: 502/423-0934

January 28, 2000

Ms. Jennifer Howell, P.T.
Shriners Hospital for Children
1900 Richmond Road
Lexington, KY 40502-1298

Re: Opinion and Declaratory Ruling regarding state law governing electromyography by the
Kentucky State Board of Physical Therapy

Dear Ms. Howell:

This correspondence is in response to your letter dated January 13, 2000 asking for an opinion from the Kentucky State Board of Physical Therapy on several issues regarding electromyography. The Board authorized this response at its last regularly scheduled meeting, January 13, 2000.

Please keep in mind that this correspondence is an opinion of the Board based solely on the facts you have presented, which will be summarized below. The Board has authorized this opinion to you as an Opinion and Declaratory Ruling pursuant to KRS 13A.130(3) and KRS 13A.010(2)(b) as the agency with jurisdiction to interpret the statutes and regulations governing the practice of physical therapy in the Commonwealth of Kentucky.

I. Whether electromyography is within the scope of practice of physical therapy.

The Board is presented with the question whether electromyography is within the scope of practice of physical therapy. You have stated that this involves “the assessment and insertion of fine wires for electromyography” at Shriner’s Hospital for Children, Lexington, Kentucky. You have specifically asked “to confirm that fine wire insertion for electromyography assessment falls within the scope of the physical therapy practice and guidelines.”

The Board is of the opinion that electromyography is within the scope of the practice of physical therapy as defined in Kentucky law by the General Assembly at Kentucky Revised Statutes (KRS) 327.010(1). KRS 327.010(1) states in pertinent part:

“Physical therapy” means the use of selected knowledge and skills in planing, organizing and directing programs for the care of individuals whose ability to function is impaired or threatened by disease or injury, encompassing preventive measures, screening, tests in aid of diagnosis, . . . , and evaluation and invasive or noninvasive procedures with emphasis on the skeletal system, neuromuscular, and cardiopulmonary function, as it relates to physical therapy. Physical therapy

includes screening or evaluations performed to determine the degree of impairment of relevant aspects such as, but not limited to, nerve and muscle function including subcutaneous bioelectrical potentials, motor development, functional capacity, and respiratory or circulatory efficiency.

The Board is of the opinion that electromyography encompasses “nerve and muscle function including subcutaneous bioelectrical potentials, motor development, and functional capacity” as within the scope of “physical therapy” as defined by statute, above.

While electromyography is within the scope of practice of physical therapy, all physical therapists must practice only those procedures that the physical therapist is competent to perform. The Board can discipline a physical therapist for “engaging or permitting the performance of substandard patient care by himself or by persons working under his supervision due to a deliberate or negligent act or failure to act, regardless of whether actual injury to the patient is established.” KRS 327.07(2) While you have specifically stated that you have attended a two-day course on this procedure, the Board wishes to point out that the scope of practice and competency to practice a procedure within the scope of practice are two issues that the Board often addresses. You have asked only for an opinion on the former, and the Board, while having no indication that you are not competent, simply is not addressing that latter.

II. Conclusion.

As the agency authorized by the Kentucky General Assembly to regulate the practice of physical therapy in this state, the Board is empowered to interpret its statutes and regulations. In summary, electromyography (fine wire insertion for electromyography assessment) is within the scope of the practice of physical therapy as defined by KRS 327.010(1).

If you have any further questions, then please do not hesitate to write to the Board again.

Sincerely yours,

Kentucky State Board of Physical Therapy
Tom Pennington, P.T., Chair

By: _____
Nancy Brinly, P.T., Executive Secretary

cc: Board members