

---

**Kentucky State Board of Physical Therapy**

9110 Leesgate Road, Suite 6

Louisville, KY 40222-5159

502/327-8497

Fax: 502/423-0934

June 28, 2001

Catherine Goodman P.T.  
806 Dixon Ave.  
Missoula, Montana 59801

**Re: Opinion and Declaratory Ruling by the Kentucky State Board of Physical Therapy regarding state law governing the ability of a physical therapist to perform clinical examinations of the integumentary system.**

Dear Ms Goodman:

This correspondence is in response to your letter dated April 4, 2001 asking for an opinion from the Kentucky State Board of Physical Therapy on issues regarding examination of the integumentary system. Please keep in mind that this 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 KRS13A.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.

The Board is presented with the question whether examination of the integumentary system is within the scope of the practice of physical therapy. The relevant part of the extensive statutory definition, KRS 327.010(1) includes “**Physical therapy**” means the use of selected knowledge and skills in planning, 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 by a licensed doctor of medicine, osteopathy, dentistry, chiropractic or podiatry 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...”

The Board is of the opinion that examination of the integumentary system is within the scope of practice of physical therapy as defined by statute, KRS 327.010(1), above. However, this is heavily qualified by limitation in the statute since the “evaluation” must “relate to physical therapy.” The Board cannot define every conceivable medical reason why an evaluation of the integumentary system would be necessary and would thus relate to the physical therapy needs of the patient.

## **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, evaluations which include the integumentary system are within the scope of the practice of “physical therapy” as defined by KRS 327.010(1) only if “related to the practice of physical therapy” and the physical therapy needs of the patient.

Sincerely,

Terry Lee Randall, PT  
Kentucky State Board of Physical Therapy

Rebecca Klusch Hughes  
Executive Director

cc: Board members