



Physical Therapy Board of California

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Athletic Trainers in the Realm of Physical Therapy

An athletic trainer in the physical therapy arena is a physical therapy aide and must be supervised as a physical therapy aide in accordance with section 2630 of the Business and Professions Code (B&P) and 1399 of the California Code of Regulations (CCR), both can be found on the website of the Physical Therapy Board of California at www.ptbc.ca.gov/. (The buttons are "Laws" for B&P Code and "Regulations" for CCR). Additionally, athletic trainers are not a regulated profession; therefore, there is no governing body.

California law does not authorize an athletic trainer to provide health care as defined in B&P Code 2052 and therefore cannot bill as such. A licensed physical therapist that is also an athletic trainer, must be cautious not to confuse the client when working as an athletic trainer. It must be clear to the client that the role as an athletic trainer is for performance enhancement and not health care. A licensed physical therapist must have a diagnosis prior to providing treatment.

Again, an athletic trainer is a physical therapy aide when services provided by the athletic trainer/physical therapy aide are for the purpose of physical therapy. A licensed physical therapist may only supervise one physical therapy aide pursuant to section 2630 of the B&P Code.

In conclusion, an athletic trainer is not regulated by the State of California; however, if the athletic trainer is doing physical therapy modalities for the purpose of physical therapy, the athletic trainer is working in the capacity of a physical therapy aide and must adhere to the supervision requirements as defined in the laws and regulations governing the practice of physical therapy.

Note: This document is not a declaratory opinion of the Physical Therapy Board of California.