



**Please Support SB 1228 by Senator Bill Montford
Temporary Licensure for Physical Therapists and Physical Therapy Assistants**

Current Situation: Florida has 11 accredited Physical Therapy Programs (Clinical Doctorate Level – DPT programs) and 18 accredited Physical Therapist Assistant Programs (Associate Degree). This state has a growing demand for patient access to physical therapy services creating an increasing need to employ recent graduates of Florida based physical therapy universities and colleges.

The Problem: Due to national testing procedure changes adopted in 2011, the physical therapy exam in Florida is only given a limited number of times (3-5) each year and the seats are limited. Due to the change in testing procedures at the national level, Florida Physical Therapy Program graduates may wait three to four months after graduation to sit for the exam. This has created a backlog of graduates waiting to take the exam. Further, as twenty-four jurisdictions currently offer temporary licenses and permits, graduates of Florida schools are being enticed to leave the state to obtain immediate employment elsewhere in these high demand physical therapy provider positions. The Florida Physical Therapy Association has recognized that there is a need to bridge the time between graduation, sitting for the examination, receiving the results of the examination and obtaining a state license.

The Solution: SB 1228, by Senator Montford amends chapter 486, Florida Statutes, to allow Physical Therapy Program graduates of accredited programs, who are waiting to take the exam after graduation, to work under a temporary license permit. The graduate would work under the direct supervision of a physical therapist while working (in the same room) and could only function in this temporary capacity until the results of the first exam are known. A licensed physical therapist may only supervise one temporary licensee permit at a time. If the graduate with a temporary permit passes, they can continue working under the temporary permit until the permanent license is issued. If the graduate fails the exam, the temporary license is revoked and they may not work until passing the exam.

The legislation will also grant a similar license to physical therapist assistant graduates. Again, they would work under the direct supervision of a physical therapist. Similarly, if the exam is passed, they may continue working but cannot continue if the exam is failed.

Both temporary permit licenses are intended to help put graduates to work immediately in a profession that is in demand to serve our aging state population and to retain the graduates from our Florida institutions. The direct supervision relationship is already well established during final clinical education internships.

SB 1228 is supported by the Physical Therapist, Physical Therapist Assistant and Physical Therapy student members of The Florida Physical Therapy Association. The Florida Department of Health, Division of Medical Quality Assurance, Florida Board of Physical Therapy, has reviewed this legislative proposal and supports authorization for the physical therapy and physical therapy assistant temporary permit licensees. The Florida Medical Association has reviewed the bill and has no objection.

Please support SB 1228 to ensure patient access to physical therapy services.

General Information:

Physical Therapists are health professionals with expertise in the examination and treatment of problems affecting people's abilities to move and function. Physical Therapists work with patients whose abilities are limited as a result of impairment in the musculoskeletal, neuromuscular, cardiovascular/pulmonary or integumentary systems. Physical Therapists are educated & experienced to manage your recovery. Physical Therapists and Physical

Therapist Assistants care for all ages, newborn to the very aged. Physical Therapists treat individuals who may be ill, are involved in injury prevention and health promotion.

Physical Therapist Education: Doctor of Physical Therapy Degree

Physical Therapist Assistant Education: Associate degree trained licensed health professional who work under the supervision of a Physical Therapist.

Work Settings: Include Hospitals, Outpatient clinics, Home Health, Private Practice, Athletics, Schools, Rehabilitation Centers, US Veteran’s Health Services, US Public Health Services & Workplaces.

Accredited Physical Therapy Schools in Florida (Doctor of Physical Therapy)

Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University, Tallahassee
Florida Gulf Coast University, Ft. Myers
Florida International University, Miami
Nova Southeastern University, Ft. Lauderdale-Davie & Tampa
University of Central Florida, Orlando
University of Florida, Gainesville
University of Miami, Miami
University of North Florida, Jacksonville
University of South Florida, Tampa
University of St Augustine for Health Sciences, St. Augustine

Accredited Physical Therapist Assistant Schools in Florida

Broward College, Coconut Creek	Keiser University, Sarasota
College of Central Florida, Ocala	Miami Dade College, Miami
Daytona State College, Daytona Beach	Pensacola State College, Pensacola
Florida Gateway College, Lake City	Polk State College, Winter Haven
Florida State College at Jacksonville, Jacksonville	St. Petersburg College, St. Petersburg
Gulf Coast State College, Panama City	State College of Florida, Bradenton
Herzing University, Winter Park	South University, Tampa
Indian River State College, Ft. Pierce	South University, Royal Palm Beach
Keiser University, Ft. Lauderdale	
Seminole State College of Florida, Altamonte Springs	

About Physical Therapy – Physical therapists can help improve or restore the mobility you need to move forward with the quality of your life. Patients looking for alternatives to surgery and/or pain medications should consider a physical therapist.

Physical therapists provide intensive education and clinical expertise from research and proven techniques to help people get back in motion. All physical therapists are required to receive a graduate degree – a clinical doctorate – from an accredited physical therapist program before taking the national licensure examination that allows them to practice. State licensure is required in each state in which a physical therapist practices. They are trusted health care professionals with extensive clinical experience who examine, diagnose, and then prevent or treat conditions that limit the body’s ability to move and function in daily life.

Action Needed: FPTA legislative team members are requesting SB 122 be heard in the Senate Health Regulation Committee in the next week or two. Immediately contact the following members of the Senate Health Regulation Committee as ask for their support for SB 1228.

Senate Health Regulation Committee

Chair: Senator Rene Garcia (R), Hialeah, (850) 487-5106, garcia.rene.web@flsenate.gov

Vice Chair: Senator Eleanor Sobel (D), Hollywood, (850) 487-5097, sobel.eleanor.web@flsenate.gov

- Senator Miguel Diaz de la Portilla (R), (850) 487-5109, portilla.miguel.web@flsenate.gov
- Senator Mike Fasano (R), New Port Richey, (850) 487-5062, fasano.mike.web@flsenate.gov
- Senator Don Gaetz (R), Destin, (850) 487-5009, gaetz.don.web@flsenate.gov
- Senator Dennis L. Jones, D.C. (R), Seminole, (850) 487-5065, jones.dennis.web@flsenate.gov
- Senator Jim Norman (R), Tampa, (850) 487-5068, norman.jim.web@flsenate.gov
