

**Michigan Department of Community Health
Bureau of Health Professions**

Physical Therapist Assistant Licensure

The Department of Community Health has been asked to clarify the relationship between Michigan's new licensure requirement for physical therapist assistants and the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) eligibility requirement to be a provider under Medicare. The two requirements are separate and distinct issues; one based on state law one based on federal regulations.

State of Michigan Licensure Requirement

Public Act 55 of 2009, which was effective June 25, 2009, requires physical therapist assistants practicing in Michigan to be licensed. Although the Act was effective immediately, the Department, in consultation with the Board of Physical Therapy, is required to promulgate administrative rules, which typically takes a minimum of 12 months. In order for physical therapist assistants to continue practicing while the rules are being promulgated, the Board of Physical Therapy has the authority to grant a limited license to an applicant who is a graduate of a physical therapist assistant education program accredited by the commission on accreditation in physical therapy education (CAPTE). To provide adequate time for all potential licensees to complete the application process, the department established December 31, 2010 as the deadline for obtaining a limited license. During this period an individual may be granted a limited license based on educational training only and will not be required to document successful passage of a national examination. A limited license issued during this period is valid until December 31, 2011. Starting January 1, 2011 or upon expiration of the limited license, an applicant for licensure will need to meet the requirements for full licensure established in the final rules.

Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) Eligibility Requirements

According to recent clarifications from CMS, an individual who is granted a limited license to practice as a physical therapist assistant in Michigan on or before December 31, 2009 and who graduated from a 2 year, college level, American Physical Therapy Association approved program is an eligible provider under Medicare. The individual would not be required to document successful passage of the national examination. Further, according to CMS, as Michigan does not require a license to practice as a physical therapist assistant until January 1, 2011 the following requirements apply to qualify as a Medicare provider. Those who completed an approved physical therapist assistant educational training program between January 1, 2008 and December 31, 2009 and were issued a limited physical therapist assistant license in Michigan after December 31, 2009 are required to document completion of the approved education training program and successful passage of the national examination. An individual who graduated from an approved course prior to January 1, 2008 would not be required to pass the national exam to qualify as a provider under Medicare in Michigan even if the limited license was not issued in Michigan until after December 31, 2009. CMS requires all physical therapist assistants to meet all licensure requirements in Michigan by January 1, 2011 to qualify as Medicare providers. Starting January 1, 2011, physical therapist assistants must meet the licensure requirements established by the Michigan Board of Physical Therapy in their Administrative Rules. For further information about CMS's Medicare requirements and Michigan physical therapist assistants you may visit the following website:

http://www.wpsmedicare.com/part_b/publications/2010_0127_mipta.shtml

For further information about Michigan's licensed physical therapist assistants contact the Bureau of Health Professions at 517-335-0918.

Effective Date: January 25, 2010