



STATE OF MICHIGAN
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
LANSING


GRETCHEN WHITMER
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MICHAEL F. RICE, Ph.D.
STATE SUPERINTENDENT

MEMORANDUM

DATE: December 9, 2022

TO: Local and Intermediate School District Superintendents Public School Academy Directors

FROM: Teri L. Rink, Ed.S., Director Office of Special Education 

SUBJECT: Use of Physician's Assistants and Nurse Practitioners in Special Education

The purpose of this memorandum is to clarify the term "physician" as it is used throughout Part 1: General Provisions of the Michigan Administrative Rules for Special Education ([MARSE](#)). The General Provisions of the MARSE includes definitions related to special education and determination requirements for the 13 categories of eligibility for special education. Although the term "physician" is used in five of the special education eligibility categories and in one definition, "physician" is not expressly defined in the MARSE. Additionally, the term "physician" is important to understand when implementing the MARSE rule for homebound/hospitalized services.

"Physician" is a broad category defined under the [Michigan Public Health Code](#), and due to the COVID-19 pandemic there has been a rise in the number of special education evaluations involving the need for physicians to serve as multidisciplinary evaluation team (MET) members. This memorandum will answer questions regarding when a physician's assistant, nurse practitioner, or licensed practical nurse may be used as part of the MET, physical therapy prescriptions, and homebound/hospitalized certification.

Physician as a MET Member

The definition of "a family physician or any other approved physician," as it is used in reference to MET in the MARSE at [R 340.1709](#), [340.1709a](#), [340.1716](#), and [340.1717](#), must meet the definition of a physician who is licensed or authorized under the Michigan Public Health Code at [1978 PA 368](#), [MCL 333.1101 et seq.](#) This includes a physician's assistant working under a practice agreement but does **not** include a nurse practitioner or a licensed practical nurse.

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Physical Therapy Prescriptions for Medicaid Reimbursement

The term physical therapy (PT), as defined in MARSE R 340.1701b(f), means “therapy prescribed by a physician.” This includes prescriptions written by a physician, a physician assistant, nurse practitioners, or an advanced practice registered nurse under the supervision of an M.D. or D.O. to prescribe PT special education services per the Michigan Public Health Code, MCL 333.17820.

Homebound and Hospitalized Services Certification

[Homebound and hospitalized services](#) provide continuity of educational services for students with medical conditions, who have been certified by their attending physician as having a medical condition that prevents them from attending school, during school hours. Section 109 of the State School Aid Act, provides a physician, as required under [MCL 388.1709](#), who is either an M.D. or a D.O., or a licensed physician's assistant, can certify a medical condition that requires the student to be confined to the home, or hospitalized, during regular school hours. This includes students in psychiatric hospitals, substance abuse centers, and students placed in other medical facilities by the parent or medical practitioners. Psychologists, chiropractors, nurse practitioners, licensed clinical nurses, or other professionals may not certify a student as eligible.

This information provided is directly aligned with and supports [Michigan’s Top 10 Strategic Education Plan](#) Goal #3: Improve the health, safety, and wellness of all learners.

For questions about this memo or other special education topics, please contact the Office of Special Education Information Line at 888-320-8384 or mde-ose@michigan.gov.