

Liaison Report to AKOTA:

March 31 & April 1, 2011 Physical Therapy and Occupational Therapy Licensing Board meeting, Juneau, AK.

Mary Melissa Robinson, MA, OT/L Liaison

New member: Valerie Phelps, PT

The 2010 Audit of licensee continuing education and work led to disciplinary action for 6 licensees for non-compliance. Fines for this ranged from \$1200 to \$4900 with one person surrendering professional licensing.

Investigation report indicates that six cases are under investigation. Under investigation are professional ethics in four of the cases.

Considerable discussion was held on the amount of time it takes to review continuing education approval requests and review courses during audit. Regulations already provide for approval by several organizations and such approval provides the licensee a mechanism for review and approval. The regulations clearly state that a continuing education course or activity must **“contribute directly to the professional competency of an occupational therapist or occupational therapy assistant and must be directly related to the skill and knowledge required to implement the principles and methods of occupational therapy.”** The board continues to use this requirement and the principles and methods indicated in the statute definition of occupational therapy to determine continuing education approval.

Continuing education must be by a qualified provider.

The certificate must be complete [per centralized regulation **12 AAC 02.960 (1-5)**] including:

- Name of participant
- Amount of continuing competency credit awarded
- Description of the continuing competency activity
- Dates of actual participation or successful completion
- Name, mailing address and signature of the instructor, sponsor, or other verifier.

Review of all other state continuing education licensing renewal requirements found a range of 15 to 40 hours for 2 year licensing periods. In some states categories of clinical and professional development were differentiated with hours in each category specified.

Legislative goals for proposed changes include:

- Indicating that the term “physiotherapy” be synonymous with “physical therapy”
- Add to language to define “Practice of Occupational Therapy” and “Practice of Physical Therapy”
- Define legislative intent regarding “public protection”
- Remove reference to Council on Medical Education and Hospitals...” as it no longer exists.
- Alter wording to “have successfully completed a curriculum approved by the American Occupational Therapy Association”
- Repeal reference to submitting proof of supervised field work (accomplished through NBCOT)
- Amend to require an English examination only if the degree program was not taught in English
- Change the wording from “Foreign Trained” to “Foreign Educated”
- Add requirement for foreign education to require jurisprudence questionnaire.
- Clarify limited permit is 120 consecutive days and only one permit may be issued in a 12 month period.
- Replace the AOTA reference to NBCOT for program school approval
- Replace reference to school approved by AMA or APTA with “substantially equivalent to the first professional degree in PT in the US.”

No Regulation changes recommended, but future projects include:

- Foreign educated applicants passing all sections of the TOEFL in one session.
- Foreign educated applicants complete jurisprudence questionnaire
- Update addresses for national organizations within regulations

Regulation projects continuing to be undertaken include:

Project: Updating PT and OT Ethics as the documents cited have been updated by their respective national organizations. Discussion continues as to advisability of using another organizations ethics or writing Board own ethics. The function of these organizations and the Licensing Board are not the same. Project: Include need for completing jurisprudence questionnaire when Foreign Trained applicants apply for a license to make this consistent with all other applicants.

Teleconference meetings were discussed and encouraged in order to accomplish such items as more timely approval of the minutes and completion of work in a more timely manner. Teleconference meetings announcements must be published with 5 days notification. The Fall Licensing board meeting is scheduled for November 17 & 18 and will be in Anchorage.

During the last year the Licensing Board has issued 148 new licenses:

89 PTs, 13 PTA,
38 OT, 8 OTA,
18 total limited permits.

As of June 30, 2011, Alaska Professional licenses are held by:
661 PTs, 71 PTAs, & 10 limited permits
280 OTs 26 OTAs

Out of state travel has been restricted for Board members. It does not appear that Board members will be able to go to the FSBPT or NBCOT national meetings even though these activities are in the Board budget and the FSBPT also pays the costs for the PT representative to attend.

The last Sunset Review of the Licensing Board was September 2005 and the next Review will be June 30, 2014.

The website for the Licensing Board has now updated the disciplinary actions posting. The dates of future meetings are also posted. The teleconference meeting scheduled for August was cancelled and minutes have yet to be approved or posted for the March 31- April 1, 2011 Licensing Board meeting. I encourage you to become familiar with the Licensing Board information site.

<http://www.commerce.state.ak.us/occ/pphy5.htm>

Mary Melissa Robinson Board Liaison to AkOTA.