

NORTH CAROLINA BOARD OF PHYSICAL THERAPY EXAMINERS

March 1, 2021

The Joint Legislative Administrative Procedure Oversight Committee
The Joint Legislative Commission on Governmental Operations
The Office of the State Budget and Management

Dear All:

Pursuant to NC Session Law 2020-97 Section 3.20.(c), the North Carolina Board of Physical Therapy Examiners (NCBPTE) is providing this interim report regarding specific efforts to exercise regulatory flexibility since the initial report filed October 31, pursuant to Session Law 2020-3. As previously stated, having ready access to physical therapy services during the state of emergency created by the COVID-19 pandemic is critical for citizens to maintain their physical health and well-being. The Board continues to prioritize ways to streamline and expedite licensure processes to provide access to safe physical therapy services in North Carolina.

Session Law 2020-97 Section 3.20.(b) notes State agencies consider : (1) Delay the collection, or modify the method of collection, of any fees, fines, or late payments assessed by the agency under its statutes, including the accrual of interest associated with any fees, fines, or late payments. (2) Delay the renewal dates of permits, licenses, and other similar certifications, registrations, and authorizations issued by the agency pursuant to its statutes. (3) Delay or modify any educational or examination requirements implemented by the agency pursuant to its statutes.

At its meeting December 9, 2020, the Board considered the topics below and made the following determinations:

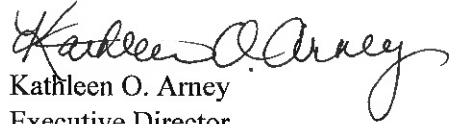
- Elimination of examination retake fees – Applicants who are eligible to take the national physical therapy exam (NPTE) and have applied for licensure through NC, must pay a “retake fee” for administrative processing, if they fail an exam attempt and retake the NPTE. Since the September 25, 2020 implementation of the Alternative Approval Pathway, less administrative work is required by the Board. The Board discussed charging this fee and voted unanimously as follows: “to set the Exam Retake Fee to zero, as long as Alternate Approval Pathway is in place.”
- The Board discussed and approved converting exam eligibility temporary rules enabling the Alternative Approval Pathway (AAP) to permanent rules based on their success in expediting application processing at the Board office.
- The Board discussed making modifications or reductions to the 2021 license renewal fees. The Board decided to leave renewal fees at the current level for several reasons, including the fact that the renewal period had already begun and there was insufficient evidence that COVID-19 conditions had created widespread layoffs, furloughs and illnesses creating

reduced work for licensees necessitating a change to the 2021 fee. Concurrent with the 2021 Renewal period, the Board implemented the national PT Minimum Data Set, which will allow the Board to collect an updated set of workforce data for NC PT and PTA licensees. This data will be used to determine the work status of PT/PTA licensees in 2021 for the Board to consider modifications to the renewal fees for 2022.

- Payments for 2021 annual license renewal were updated to accept online payments (credit cards and e-checks) to facilitate faster processing of renewal applications.
- Reminders were posted in the annual Board newsletter that continuing competence requirements for annual license renewal may be completed 100% online with no requirement that “live, in-person” activities be completed. This enabled licensees to complete the requirements and renew their licenses in a timely manner per the current Board regulations.
- Jurisprudence Exercises required for licensure applicants and PT Compact Applicants are free and accessible online. These continue to be required to maintain Board standards for public protection.

If there are any questions regarding this report, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Respectfully submitted,


Kathleen O. Arney
Executive Director