

SCPT Practice Guideline #16

Exercise Therapists

Background

Physical therapists commonly work with exercise therapists in facilities within Saskatchewan. Currently, exercise therapy is not a self-regulating profession in Saskatchewan and exercise therapists are therefore neither licensed nor regulated.

The undergraduate education of an exercise therapist does not include biomechanical assessment or exercise prescription for clients with acute injury or acute or chronic pathology.

The practice of direct referral to an exercise therapist of a client with an acute or chronic disease process or injury with no planned, consistent monitoring or follow up by a physical therapist within the facility puts the client at risk.

The SCPT Code of Ethics provides:

17. Physical therapists shall conduct themselves in such a manner as to merit the respect of the society for the profession and its members.

Practice Guidelines

1. Physical therapists who own or control treatment facilities and/or provide direct therapy are responsible for ensuring the safety of their clients. If a client is known or suspected to have an acute or chronic disease process or injury, the client should be screened by a physical therapist to determine that the client can safely proceed with a specific exercise program prior to seeing an exercise therapist.
2. Physical therapists who own or control facilities that provide exercise therapy services should require that an intake screening assessment be undertaken by one of the facility's own physical therapists, regardless of the source of the referral, in order to ensure both that the referral is appropriate and that liability insurance coverage is in place to protect the client.