

SCPT Practice Guideline # 23 - Use of Title, Credentials, and Specialist Designation

BACKGROUND

The SCPT Code of Ethics provides:

5. Physical therapists shall confine themselves to clinical diagnosis and management in those aspects of physical therapy in which they have been educated and which the profession recognizes.
6. Physical therapists shall assume full responsibility for all care they provide.
17. Physical therapists shall conduct themselves in such a manner as to merit the respect of the society for the profession and its members.

The Physical Therapists' Act - 1998 provides:

21 No person other than a member shall use the title "Physiotherapist", "Physical Therapist", the abbreviation "P.T.", or any word, title or designation, abbreviated or otherwise, to imply that the person is a member.

Definitions:

Title refers to the words "Physiotherapist", "Physical Therapist" the abbreviation "P.T.", or any word, title or designation, abbreviated or otherwise, to imply that the person is a member as defined in the Physical Therapists' Act of 1998

Credentials refers to words or abbreviations that indicate an educational qualification from an accredited educational institution, certification or specific competency. i.e. academic degrees, diplomas or certificates (BScPT, MPT, PHD, FCAMT, AFCI)

Clinical Specialist - The College recognizes a "clinical specialist" to be a registrant who possesses a specialist certification in a defined area of physiotherapy practice (as approved by the Canadian Alliance of Physiotherapy Regulators clinical speciality recognition review process).

- In order for a registrant to use a title that indicates that he/she is a specialist, the registrant must hold a specialty designation that is approved by the College.
- The College takes a national approach to the recognition of specialty designations and relies on the rigour of the Canadian Alliance of Physiotherapy Regulators' specialty recognition review process when granting permission to use the title "specialist".
- The College approves specialty certifications recognized by the Canadian Alliance of Physiotherapy (please [contact the Alliance](#) for a current list). As of August 2016 this included Physiotherapy Certification Board of Canada CPA Clinical Specialist program and American Board of Physical Therapy Specialties programs.
- If you have a specialty certification from a program not yet approved, you can ask the Alliance to review the specialty program.
- Registrants entitled to use the title "specialist" may voluntarily choose to have the relevant information indicating the type of specialty certification(s) he or she holds listed in the College's Membership listing area.

- In order to maintain authorization you must annually at time of renewal confirm you continue to hold the specialty certification.

PRACTICE GUIDELINES

Physical Therapists:

- use their protected title while engaging in physical therapy practice and when identifying themselves to clients and others.
- ensure that the protected title or credential that includes the protected title directly follows their name in order to show their professional designation and membership with the College. i.e. J. Smith PT or J. Smith BScPT or J. Smith MPT, etc.
- may use other credentials in addition to their protected title with the protected title appearing first in the order of reference. i.e. J. Smith PT BScPT
- ensure that additional credentials are written in a clear manner and when abbreviations are used these must be consistent with what is recommended and/or approved by the educational organization responsible for those achievements
- do not use professional association, society or body membership as credentials. i.e. MCPA (member of the CPA)
- may use specialist designations recognized by the council (as outlined in definition of clinical specialist above)
- ensure that if granted permission to use the title “specialist” they use his or her protected title first (i.e. physiotherapist/ physical therapist or PT) followed by his or her approved specialty designation including identifying information of the area of specialty. i.e. J. Smith PT Clinical Specialist (Neurosciences)
- do not use the title ‘doctor’ or (Dr) preceding their name when providing patient care as a physical therapist. The conferred doctoral degree is noted after their name and related PT qualification. The title Dr. may be used for research/academic purposes in non client care settings
- ensure that if practicing more than one discipline they keep their roles, titles, credentials, documentation and billing practice separate and distinct.

REFERENCES

- [Saskatchewan College of Physical Therapists Regulatory Bylaws](#)
- [Physical Therapists' Act 1998](#)
- [Alliance of Physiotherapy Regulators](#)
- [Canadian Physiotherapy Association - Clinical Specialty Program](#)
- [College of Physical Therapists of Manitoba - Position Statement - Use of Title and Credentials](#)
- [Nova Scotia College of Physiotherapists - Practice Standard - Use of Title and Credentials](#)
- [College of Physiotherapists of Ontario - The use of Restricted Titles, Credentials, and Specialty Designations and Position Statement on Specialty Designations](#)
- [College of Physical Therapists of British Columbia - Practice Standard - Use of Title and Credentials](#)
- [Physiotherapy Alberta - Standard of Practice - Title and Credentials](#)
- [College of Physical Therapists New Brunswick Regulations - Schedule D](#)