

MARCH 2021

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A Message From the APTA New Mexico President

APTA New Mexico 2021: The Other Side

Here we are on the other side of 2020! Though still impacted by national and state public health emergency orders, APTA New Mexico is strong and moving forward. We began the Centennial celebration with APTA's Founder's Day event, which took place on January 15, 2021, with the opening of the new APTA Headquarters in Washington DC.

We are excited to be sponsoring our Centennial Scholar, Marcus Scott, PT, DPT, to represent New Mexico in the APTA Centennial Scholar Program. He has begun his adventure meeting with APTA assigned mentors and APTA New Mexico leaders during board meetings and conference calls. He is actively working on his capstone project. Stay tuned for more information on his project!



The ability of physical therapy professionals to participate in vaccine administration depends on state scope of practice as defined in each state's practice act, training specific to the COVID vaccine and its administration, followed by a skills check of the specific physical therapy professional by an approved healthcare professional vaccine provider. The following information serves to provide an update on this practice in New Mexico.

In December 2020, APTA New Mexico testified at the December meeting of the NM Physical Therapy Licensing Board to consider the adoption of proposed language to cover licensed PT/PTA professionals who may have been asked to provide services outside the scope of their physical therapy practice during the coronavirus crisis standards of care. The following language was accepted by the NM Physical Therapy Licensing Board to cover such services for the duration of the current public health emergency order:

- “For the duration of the current public health emergency, it shall not be considered a violation of any applicable rule or regulation governing the scope of practice for physical therapy or unprofessional conduct for the organized health care staff, acting by and through its medical staff executive committee, to authorize and direct care to serve as COVID-19 providers and provide health care services to all patients of the hospital or healthcare facility where they serve even though the provision of those services may be outside of each such COVID-19 provider’s normal practice.”

On January 28, 2021, APTA streamed a live event entitled: “APTA Live: COVID Vaccine” in which the role of physical therapists in vaccine administration was reviewed. Click [HERE](#) for the recorded event. At that time, the states of Maryland, Colorado, and California had executive orders granting physical therapist professionals privileges to administer the COVID-19 vaccine, to the citizens of those states, under conditions specific to training with vaccine administration skill checks by a qualified health care professional. At the same time, APTA New Mexico was requested to collaborate with the UNM School of PT in promoting physical therapy professionals as qualified to provide COVID-19 vaccine administration with specific training under appropriate supervision. Beth Moody Jones, PT, DPT, EdD, Division Chief at the UNM School of PT, along with the support of UNM School of Medicine Interim Dean Martha Cole McGrew, MD, wrote a letter of support to both NM Health and Human Services Cabinet Secretary, David R Scrase, MD, and to NM Department of Health Cabinet Secretary, Tracie C. Collins, MD, promoting the training of physical therapists to assist in vaccine administration to increase access to COVID-19 vaccinations to citizens in all areas of New Mexico. In mid-February, as a follow-up to this letter of support, APTA New Mexico sent a letter of support to Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham:

- “On behalf of APTA New Mexico, we would like to request that the Governor urgently and seriously consider expanding vaccination privileges to physical therapists who provide care in good faith to extend the state’s health care capacity to rural and underserved areas during this public health crisis.”

Both letters promote physical therapy professionals as having extensive knowledge in the musculoskeletal system and able to participate in an emergency medical response. In addition, Dr. Moody-Jones referenced the training of those physical therapists certified in dry needling as specific to *“needle safety and insertion through their use of monofilament needles for dry needling of muscles.”* To date, no response has been heard from the New Mexico Office of the Governor regarding the APTA New Mexico letter.

The APTA Practice Department has posted a practice advisory update on PTs and vaccine administration which can be found [HERE](#). New Jersey and Utah have been added to the list of now five states with executive orders allowing expanded scope of PT practice for vaccine administration. In addition, physical therapy professionals are participating voluntarily in active roles within their personal scope of practice assisting in vaccination clinics, particularly in rural areas within New Mexico, depending on the need for support. Such roles may include greeter, intake, registration, follow-up, and general administrative oversight. For further information regarding PTs and Vaccine Administration, contact the APTA Practice Department. Additional CDC training resources are also available [HERE](#).

APTA New Mexico and Legislative Advocacy

APTA New Mexico members have worked hard to promote legislation impacting physical therapy practice in New Mexico. We are pleased that Senate Bill 145, the Omnibus Sunset Act, sponsored by Senator William Burt, passed unanimously in the Senate and in the House, following several committee hearings, and is now waiting for the Governor to sign. Please email the Office of the Governor asking her to sign this legislation and send thank you notes to Senator Burt for his work to support this legislation, which renews the practice acts of several health care professions, including our physical therapy practice act. We also appreciate with sincere gratitude, the work of Senator Siah Correa- Hemphill and Senator Carrie Hamblen, for their support to sponsor Senate Bill 60, The Physical Therapy Licensure Compact, in the Senate and are indebted to APTA New Mexico lobbyist, Julianna Koob, Representative Elizabeth “Liz” Thomson and Representative Deborah Armstrong for their support in strategic planning in support of this legislation. We were disappointed that SB60 was tabled in the Senate Judiciary Committee after discussion between its members, following expert witness testimony. However, I am impressed to see the APTA New Mexico Legislative Committee in action and am pleased with the strength and

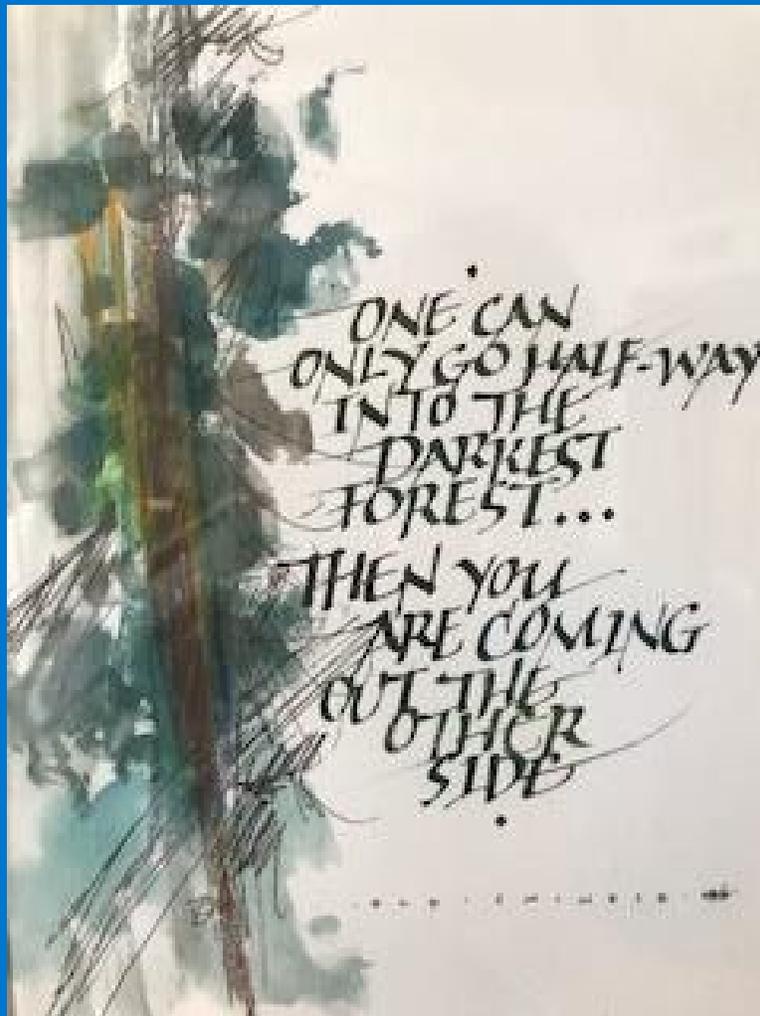
responsiveness of this committee. The hard work and preparation by all is truly appreciated.

We are all becoming experts in the use of Zoom and other electronic platforms due to this public health emergency, which significantly impacted the 2021 New Mexico Legislative Session. Thanks to Julianna for setting up numerous sessions with state legislators via Zoom to review the proposed legislation, resulting in securing sponsors and support in the initial stages of advocacy. Many members of APTA New Mexico participated in these sessions, which resulted in establishing positive relationships with legislators, other health care professionals, and community members. Though our PT Compact legislation was tabled, we will continue to debrief, reorganize, and prepare strategy for the legislation to be heard in next year's session. While a momentary perceived loss, we will build on the foundation of positive relationships established through the work of our physical therapy community in action and strive to keep our focus on improving access to physical therapy for all New Mexicans.

Finally, I leave you to consider the following principle of **Access/Equity** as set forth in the [APTA Position Statement: Guiding Principles to Achieve the Vision](#).

- “The physical therapy profession will recognize health inequities and disparities and work to ameliorate them through innovative models of service delivery, advocacy, attention to the influence of the social determinants of health on the consumer, collaboration with community entities to expand the benefit provided by physical therapy, serving as a point of entry to the health care system, and direct outreach to consumers to educate and increase awareness.”

Genia Devenport PT, MS
President, APTA New Mexico



[APTA New Mexico's Founders Day Submission](#)



Federal Affairs Legislative Update

Kim Parker-Guerrero, PT, DPT
APTA New Mexico Federal Affairs Liaison (FAL)

NMAPTA's Legislative Committee members are to be applauded for their hard work during the recent state legislative session. While the outcome isn't what we desired and there's more work to do in the future, it's helpful to see that other states are working on the same legislative issues to support both their patients and members. See APTA's report [HERE](#).

February 2021 APTA Update

APTA has updated members on several topics including Telehealth, Medicare Sequestration, COVID, PTAs in the VA. Click [HERE](#) to read more.

APTA Advocacy

It takes all of us calling, emailing, and meeting with both state and federal legislators to get our issues heard and legislation passed. If you haven't already, please sign up to join the APTA Advocacy Network to join the grassroots effort of APTA members interested in public policy and advocacy. Also, an easy way to keep track of current legislation is to download the APTA ADVOCACY app. You can find and communicate with your legislator and learn what legislative issues APTA is focused on in 2021. Click [HERE](#) for APTA's 2021 Public Policy Priorities.

Representatives Sherrill, McKinley Reintroduce Bipartisan Legislation to Increase Access to Telehealth Services

This legislation expands practitioners eligible for Medicare reimbursement for telehealth services. Click [HERE](#) to read more.

Locum Tenens Legislation -

On 3/8/21, the *Prevent Interruptions in Physical Therapy Act* APTA-supported legislation, was introduced. It will expand the use of locum tenens by physical therapists under Medicare. The 21st Century Cures Act of 2016 contained a provision that APTA successfully advocated for inclusion that added physical therapists to the health care professionals who may use locum tenens under Medicare. This allows a physical therapist to bring in another licensed physical therapist to treat Medicare patients and bill Medicare through the practice provider number during temporary absences, due to illness, vacation, etc. The existing law, however, applies only to physical therapists in rural and underserved areas. This limitation prohibits many physical therapists in private practice from taking needed absences without interrupting patient care. More news to come on this legislation.

Free APTA Webinar "Hot Topics in Federal Policy and Reimbursement" - This webinar will help physical therapists, physical therapist assistants, and physical therapy students stay apprised of the policy changes at the federal and state level that may impact them and their practice. This is a **free** webinar and the pre-recording is now available on APTA Learning Center..

Please Participate in an Imaging Survey by April 30



Help Provide the Senior Athlete Fitness Exam (SAFE) at the National Senior Games in Ft. Lauderdale, FL

May 10-20, 2022

We will be screening athletes at the National Senior Games from May 10-20, 2022 (indoors in the Athlete Village). PTs, DPT students and PTAs are all encouraged to volunteer. Volunteers will be assigned to one station and will receive training prior to the event with additional orientation onsite. Those that volunteer for the event will receive the 2.5 hour online SAFE course free. This is an excellent time to work with an inspiring group of motivated, aging athletes. Start making your plans now to participate for one or multiple days. Sign up to volunteer [HERE](#).

Contact [Becca Jordre, PT, DPT](#) with questions.

More Info on the Screening

Each registered athlete has the opportunity to participate in the screen which will look at their basic past medical history, sport and training history, cardiovascular risk factors, strength, flexibility, balance and mobility. All tests have normative data for the senior athlete population and thresholds for associated risks. As a part of the screen we also provide basic consultation, educational materials and suggest appropriate referrals as needed.

History of the SAFE

The Senior Athlete Fitness Exam (SAFE) was developed initially as a public relations activity for the South Dakota Physical Therapy Association. After finding great interest at the state level we connected with the National Senior Games Association and now offer the SAFE to athletes competing at both the state and national level. We've presented many of our findings at CSM and in peer-reviewed publications and hope to learn more as we continue testing. Our goal is to offer the SAFE at all state games in order to educate and assist this highly motivated population of aging adults.

New Mexico Involvement

New Mexico hosted the 2019 National Senior Games and many local PTs, PTAs and students provided SAFE at this very successful event. We have also provided SAFE at two previous New Mexico Senior Games in 2017 & 2018. Are you interested in organizing future local New Mexico SAFE events or a New Mexico contingent to go to Nationals in 2022? Contact Beth Black, PT at bblackpt@gmail.com.

SAVE *the* DATE

—
**APTA NEW MEXICO
VIRTUAL FALL CONFERENCE**

SEPT. 17-19. 2021

2021 APTA House of Delegates - Update From the New Mexico Delegation

**Beth Black, PT, Board-Certified Clinical Specialist in Geriatric Physical Therapy
APTA New Mexico Chief Delegate**

The APTA House of Delegates is the legislative body of the APTA, functioning similar to the US Congress, and you are represented each year from elected delegates from New Mexico. This year the House is one virtual day on August 28 and in person in DC on September 11-12.

Your New Mexico delegation to the House of Delegates and PTA Caucus are meeting monthly (by zoom) to prepare and discuss current APTA issues and national leadership candidates. In addition to the elected three Delegates and one PTA Caucus Representative, our Alternate Delegate, President, Genia Devenport and three other APTA New Mexico members are participating in discussing current APTA issues at the state and national level, plus national leadership candidates. 2021 was planned to have a different schedule due to the APTA Centennial, meeting in the fall instead of in June. With this changed schedule plus the pandemic, discussions have been slower than usual but are increasing in 2021.

Some of the current issues being discussed:

- Many Revisions of the APTA Bylaws, Which Might Include:
 - PTA voting rights within the House (2 levels possible: PTA Caucus Reps having vote in the House, PTAs being eligible to represent their state as House Delegates).
 - Inclusion of a Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Committee as a standing committee of APTA.
- Productivity and Performance Standards in Physical Therapy
- ChoosePT Website—Accessibility and DEI
- The Future of Specialization in the Physical Therapy Profession
- Establishing a New Section/Academy: **Amputation and Limb Difference Physical Therapy**
- Changing the Structure & Responsibilities of the Ethics & Judicial Committee (EJC)
- Addressing Student Debt
- National Leadership Candidate Nominations

Interested in national APTA issues? You can join us as part of the monthly zoom discussion group. Email Beth if you are interested. You can also participate in being aware of current issues online through the APTA Communities, or “the Hub” online at <http://communities.apta.org/>. The Community is called “House of Delegates” and within that Community are Forums “Announcements By and For Delegates” and

“Motion Discussions” which are viewable by any APTA member, but only Delegates can post to it.

We appreciate your feedback and thoughts, as we represent you at the upcoming House and PTA Caucus.

Chief Delegate

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An Update From the APTA New Mexico Payment Chair

Kim Parker-Guerrero, PT, DPT
APTA New Mexico Payment Chair

PTA MODIFIER

APTA provides more guidance on use of PTA modifier [HERE](#).

CONTRACTING ISSUES IN 2021

- **Extrapolation**
 - Extrapolation is the Use of Statistical Sampling for Overpayment Estimation
 - Traditionally Seen with Medicare
 - Moving to Commercial Market
- **Fee Based Electronic Fund Transfers (EFTs)**
 - Check Based Payment Coming to an End
 - Shift to Electronic Fund Transactions is Accelerating
 - Up to 5% EFT Fee Imposed on the Provider
 - Identify Those Entities that are Unfairly Charging you for EFT, Contact Them and Request the No Cost Version of the EFT Transaction
- **Virtual Credit Cards (VCCs)**
 - **Issue for Physicians, Now Moving to PT**
 - Up to 5% Fee Imposed on the Provider
 - Only Way to Avoid VCCs is EFT Enrollment

What should providers do? APTA Encourages Providers to Consider the Following Steps:

- Carefully review payer contracts and all amendments.
 - At minimum, re-review all contracts annually.
 - Keep abreast of payer newsletters.
- Pay attention to the presence or absence of language related to extrapolation, EFT and/or virtual credit card transactions.
- If extrapolation language is present, ask that it be removed or that a statement be included that extrapolation is prohibited without the provider's consent.
- Request a no cost version of EFT transactions.
- Challenge virtual credit card payments and/or any associated fees. (APTA templates).
- Check state law on extrapolation, EFT transactions, and virtual credit cards.
- Consult with an attorney for legal counsel and advice.

NCCI PTP EDITS ADVOCACY

As a result of aggressive advocacy many problematic NCCI PTP edits were deleted with a retroactive date of 1/1/2020. APTA sent letters to 5 large national payers regarding these deletions. A template letter was developed for components to use with local payers.

What is the Current NCCI PTP Edits Status in the Commercial Space?

- **CIGNA** will not retroactively process claims but will acknowledge the NCCI edits deletions starting Jan. 1, 2021.
- **Aetna** will retroactively reprocess claims to Jan 1, 2020. Providers do not need to resubmit their claims; instead, Aetna will auto-process the claims. The insurer says this could take several months.
- **Humana** will retroactively reprocess claims to Jan. 2, 2020. However, unlike Aetna, providers must resubmit claims.

RESOURCES

- **APTA Telehealth Certificate Series** - Learn best practices and tips covering ethical and regulatory considerations, administration and marketing, technology, and clinical application APTA Learning Center.
- **Commercial Payer Telehealth or E-Visit Coverage**
- **Coding and Billing**
- **Payment**
- **Friday Focus**
 - Covers payment trends, initiatives, legislation/regulation, and other related issues.
- **Appealing a Denial: APTA Template Letters for Appeals**
- **Utilization Management Advocacy**
 - <https://www.uhcprovider.com/content/dam/provider/docs/public/policies/index/commercial/habilitative-services-outpatient-rehabilitation-therapy-05012021.pdf>
- <https://coherehealth.com/cohere-health-announces-partnership-with-humana/>

Please Participate in A Survey Study of Physical Therapists Who Treat Patients With Chronic Low Back Pain



Thank You for Being a Member of APTA New Mexico!

