

**DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
HEALTH REGULATION AND LICENSING ADMINISTRATION**

BOARD OF PHYSICAL THERAPY
AUTHORITY FOR GUIDANCE

May 13, 2020
DATE OF POLICY

20-002
POLICY NO.

POLICY STATEMENT

**SUSPENSION OF FACE-TO-FACE CONTINUING EDUCATION REQUIREMENT
DURING THE COVID-19 HEALTH EMERGENCY**

In light of the current public health emergency, the Board of Physical Therapy (Board) has adopted the following policy and offered this guidance related to the continuing education (CE) required to maintain physical therapy and physical therapist assistant (PTA) licenses in the District.

Section 6706.4 of Title 17 of the District of Columbia Municipal Regulations (DCMR) requires that, to qualify for the licensure renewal, a physical therapist (PT) must complete forty (40) hours of physical therapy CE during the two (2) years of the licensure term but no more than twenty (20) hours may be obtained online through internet courses. 17 DCMR § 6706.4(a). Similarly, 17 DCMR § 8206.4 requires that a PTA must complete thirty (30) hours of physical therapy CE during the licensure term and no more than half of the required CE may be obtained from online courses, home study, or any distance education. 17 DCMR § 8206.5.

On March 11, 2020, the Mayor declared the state of public health emergency in the District due to the threat of COVID-19 pandemic. Mayor's Order 2020-045. Following this declaration, Mayor Muriel Bowser issued an order prohibiting mass gatherings of fifty (50) or more persons on March 16, 2020. Mayor's Order 2020-048. On March 24, 2020, non-essential businesses were ordered closed. Mayor's Order 2020-053. A stay-at-home order was issued on March 30, 2020, prohibiting District residents from leaving their home except for certain specified essential businesses. Mayor's Order 2020-054. Similar measures have also been adopted in all U.S. states and territories.

As a result of these emergency restrictions, it has become clear that licensees will face the impossibility or at least difficulty in obtaining live, in-person CE. The Board has therefore voted to suspend the live, in-person, face-to-face requirements of 17 DCMR §§ 6706.4 and 8206.5, effective during the current licensure term from February 1, 2019 to January 31, 2021. Accordingly, PTs and PTAs may fulfill their CE requirement with CE programs or activities obtained via remote methods, distance learning, or home studies, including pre-recorded online presentations. While the implication of this guidance may be obvious, the Board nevertheless

Board of Physical Therapy

Policy Statement 20-002: Suspension of Face-to-Face Continuing Education Requirement

also advises licensees that live, in-person educational programs completed before, during, or after the public health emergency declaration will also be accepted.

Further, licensees are advised that all other CE requirements continue to be effective, such as the two (2) hours of LGBTQ continuing education and ten (10) percent of the required total consisting of public health priority subjects, which may be found in the Public Notice at https://dchealth.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/doh/page_content/attachments/DC%20Health%20Public%20Notice%20Regarding%20Public%20Health%20Topics%20for%20CE.pdf.

All inquiries pertaining to the practice of addiction counseling, including the CE requirements, may be directed to the Board's Health Licensing Specialist, Ms. Ashley Balma, at (202)724-8819 or ashley.balma@dc.gov.