

Review of Jurisdiction and Language Regarding Physical Therapists and Imaging

This review was completed in 2024 by members of the Ethics & Legislation Committee in response to a request from membership. Members should refer to the individual jurisdiction boards for additional questions.

APTA	Policy	RC 12-16 Resolved that APTA pursue practice authority for imaging referral in physical therapist practice
APTA	Other	https://www.orthopt.org/uploads/content_files/files/APTA_Imaging_Referral_Resource_2022.pdf
FSBPT	Statute	Model Practice Act 1.02 Definitions As specifically used in this [act], the following terms have the meanings set forth below, unless the context requires otherwise. 22. "Testing" means standard methods and techniques used to gather data about the patient/client, including but not limited to imaging, electrodiagnostic and electrophysiologic tests and measures.
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Alabama	Statute	Physical therapy does not include radiology or electrosurgery.
Alaska	Statute	"physical therapy" does not include the use of roentgen rays and radioactive materials for diagnosis and therapeutic purposes".
Arizona	Statute	32-2041.01. Musculoskeletal imaging; ordering; requirements; reporting A. A physical therapist may order musculoskeletal imaging consisting of plain film radiographs. The imaging shall be performed by a health care practitioner who is authorized pursuant to this title to perform the imaging and shall be interpreted by a physician who is licensed pursuant to chapter 13, 14 or 17 of this title and trained in radiology interpretation. B. A physical therapist shall report results for all imaging tests the physical therapist orders pursuant to subsection A of this section to the patient's health care practitioner of record or the referring health care practitioner, if designated, within seven days after receiving the results. If the patient does not have a health care practitioner of record, the physical therapist shall refer the patient to an appropriate health care practitioner if the physical therapist has reasonable cause to believe that any symptoms or conditions are present that may require services beyond the physical therapist's scope of practice.
Arkansas		Silent on imaging
California		Silent on imaging

Colorado	Policy	A licensed physical therapist may order or perform, with clinical justification, any diagnostic imaging which is within the recognized standards of the practice of physical therapy, including magnetic resonance imaging (MRI).
Connecticut		Silent on imaging
Delaware		Silent on imaging
District of Columbia	Policy	In a 2010 letter, the DC PT Board clarified it's ruling that PTs can order diagnostic imaging studies.
Florida	Statute	(b) The use of roentgen rays and radium for diagnostic and therapeutic purposes and the use of electricity for surgical purposes, including cauterization, are not "physical therapy" for purposes of this chapter.
Georgia	Statute	The board shall have authority to refuse to grant or restore a license to an applicant or to discipline a physical therapist licensed under this article upon a finding by the board that the licensee or applicant has: Ordered radiology, performed surgery, ordered laboratory or body fluid testing, diagnosed disease, or practiced medicine;
Hawaii	Regulations	"Healing arts" means the medical, dental, chiropractic, podiatric, and veterinary professions. "Healing arts screening" means the testing of human beings using x-ray machines for the detection or evaluation of health indications when such tests are not specifically and individually ordered by a licensed practitioner of the healing arts legally authorized to prescribe such x-ray tests for the purpose of diagnosis or treatment.
Idaho	Statute	The practice of physical therapy shall not include the use of radiology, surgery or medical diagnosis of disease
Illinois	Statute	"Physical therapy" does not include radiology, electrosurgery, acupuncture, chiropractic technique or determination of a differential diagnosis; provided, however, the limitation on determining a differential diagnosis shall not in any manner limit a physical therapist licensed under this Act from performing an evaluation and establishing a physical therapy treatment plan pursuant to such license.
Indiana		Silent on imaging
Iowa		Silent on imaging
Kansas		Silent on imaging

Kentucky	Statute	327.0010(1) The use of roentgen rays and radium for diagnostic or therapeutic purposes...are not authorized
Louisiana	Statute	37:2407(5)(B) ""physical therapy" does not include the use of roentgen rays and radium, isotopes, and ionizing radiation for diagnostic and therapeutic purposes"
Maine	Statute	A licensed physical therapist may not use roentgen rays or radium or use electricity for surgical purposes. A licensed physical therapist assistant may act only under the direction of a physical therapist licensed to practice in this State.
Maryland	Other	Both in Aug 2012 and March 2014, the Maryland Board of Physical Therapy Examiners confirmed physical therapists may refer patients to a radiologist for radiological imaging and testing when appropriate, including x-ray, MRI, and CT scans, provided that the interpretation of such tests are be done by a radiologist.
Massachusetts		Silent on imaging
Michigan		Silent on imaging
Minnesota	Regulations	4732.0560 ORDERING OF DIAGNOSTIC RADIOGRAPHIC OR THERAPEUTIC PROCEDURES. bp. 2. Diagnostic radiographic procedure orders. A. The order for a radiographic examination can be made only by a licensed practitioner of the healing arts, a certified clinical nurse specialist, certified nurse midwife, certified nurse practitioner, or physician assistant. The physician assistant must show eligibility to order radiographic procedures through the physician assistant's written physician-physician assistant agreement with a copy on site at the facility. Subp. 76. Healing arts. "Healing arts" means health professions for diagnostic or healing treatment of human and animal maladies that are regulated under Minnesota Statutes, chapter 147, 153, or 156; or section 148.01, 148.106, or 150A.05, subdivision 1, clause (4), for the lawful practice of medicine, dentistry, veterinary medicine, osteopathic medicine, chiropractic, and podiatry.
Mississippi	Other	It is appropriate for the therapist to refer to these images, if available, to assist in managing patients. It is considered out of scope for a therapist to order these studies initially for licensees under the jurisdiction of the MS State Board of Physical Therapy.
Missouri		Missouri is currently one of only 5 states (MO, AL, ID, NC, & SD) that does NOT have any statewide licensure requirements. In other words, a person does NOT have to be licensed to operate x-ray equipment, and in fact no such license exists in Missouri

Montana		Silent on imaging
Nebraska		Silent on imaging
Nevada	Statute	NRS 640.024 "Practice of physical therapy" defined. 2. Does not include: (b) The use of roentgenic rays or radium; Examinations by X-ray must be ordered by the physician or podiatrist responsible for the care of the patient (NV Admin. Code § 449.993 - Diagnostic radiological services.)
New Hampshire		Silent on imaging
New Jersey	Other	In a 2016 public session, the New Jersey Board of Physical Therapy Examiners clarified that it permits PTs to refer a patient for diagnostic testing, such as imaging studies.
New Mexico		Silent on imaging
New York		NYPTA will identify and address statutory and regulatory barriers to physical therapists ability to order diagnostic imaging in New York State
North Carolina	Other	The board includes imaging as a topic in the "addressing public protection" section of their newsletter
North Dakota	Statute	43-26.1-11.1. Ordering imaging. A physical therapist may order musculoskeletal imaging consisting of plain film radiographs if the physical therapist holds a clinical doctorate degree in physical therapy or has completed a board-approved formal medical imaging training program.
Ohio	Statute	(2) "Physical therapy" does not include either of the following: (a) The use of electricity for cauterization or other surgical purposes; (b) The use of Roentgen rays or radium for diagnostic or therapeutic purposes.
Oklahoma		Silent on imaging
Oregon		Silent on imaging
Pennsylvania		Silent on imaging
Puerto Rico		Silent on imaging

Rhode Island	Statute	<p>§ 5-40-23. Ordering diagnostic imaging — Sunset.</p> <p>(a) Physical therapists licensed pursuant to § 5-40-7 may order diagnostic imaging as defined in § 5-40-1 to be performed and interpreted by other licensed healthcare professionals.</p> <p>(b) All diagnostic imaging tests ordered by a physical therapist shall be reported by the physical therapist to the patient’s designated primary care physician of record within seven (7) days following receipt of the results. This reporting shall not be required if the patient does not have a primary care physician.</p> <p>(c) Managed healthcare plans shall provide a utilization report to the general assembly no later than September 1, 2022, and annually thereafter.</p> <p>(d) Unless extended by the general assembly, physical therapists shall not be authorized to order diagnostic imaging as an authorized practice of physical therapy after December 31, 2025.</p>
South Carolina	Statute	The use of roentgen rays and radium for diagnostic or therapeutic purposes and the use of electricity for surgical purposes, including cauterization and colonic irrigations, are not authorized under the term "physical therapy" as used in this chapter, and nothing in this chapter shall be construed to authorize a physical therapist to prescribe medications or order laboratory or other medical tests.
South Dakota		Silent on imaging
Tennessee		Silent on imaging
Texas	Statute	Sec. 453.303. PROHIBITED USE OF CERTAIN PROCEDURES. In practicing physical therapy, a person may not use: (1) roentgen rays or radium for a diagnostic or therapeutic purpose;

Utah	Statute	<p>58-54-303. Supervision and prescription required -- Imaging ordered by physical therapists.</p> <p>(1) The practice of radiologic technology by a radiologic technologist licensed under this chapter shall be under the general supervision of a radiologist or radiology practitioner and may be performed only upon the order of a radiologist or radiology practitioner acting within the scope of the radiologist's or radiology practitioner's license and experience within the scope of practice of a radiology practitioner.</p> <p>(2)</p> <p>(a) Notwithstanding Subsection (1), a physical therapist acting within the scope of the physical therapist's license and experience may order plain radiographs and magnetic resonance imaging if:</p> <p>(i) the physical therapist designates a physician to receive the results of the plain radiographs or magnetic resonance imaging; and</p> <p>(ii) the physician designated in Subsection (2)(a)(i) agrees to receive the results of the plain radiographs or magnetic resonance imaging.</p> <p>(b) A physical therapist who orders plain radiographs or magnetic resonance imaging under Subsection (2)(a) shall:</p> <p>(i) communicate with the patient's physician to ensure coordination of care; and</p> <p>(ii) refer a patient to an appropriate provider when the findings of the imaging that was ordered by the physical therapist indicate that the services that are needed exceed the physical therapist's experience and scope of practice.</p> <p>(c) A physical therapist is not subject to Subsection (2)(b)(i) if:</p> <p>(i) a radiologist has read the image and has not identified a significant finding;</p> <p>(ii) the patient does not have a primary care physician; and</p> <p>(iii) the patient was not referred to the physical therapist for health care services by another health care provider.</p>
Vermont		Silent on imaging
Virginia		Silent on imaging
Washington		Silent on imaging
West Virginia		Silent on imaging

Wisconsin	Statute	<p>448.56 (7)(a) Ordering X-rays.(a) A physical therapist may order X-rays to be performed by qualified persons only if the physical therapist satisfies one of the following qualifications, as further specified by the examining board by rule:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The physical therapist holds a clinical doctorate degree in physical therapy. 2. The physical therapist has completed a nationally recognized specialty certification program. 3. The physical therapist has completed a nationally recognized residency or fellowship certified by an organization recognized by the examining board. <p>448.56(7)(a)4.4. The physical therapist has completed a formal X-ray ordering training program with demonstrated physician involvement.</p> <p>(b) When a physical therapist orders an X-ray, the physical therapist shall communicate with the patient's primary care physician or an appropriate health care practitioner to ensure coordination of care, unless all of the following apply:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A radiologist has read the X-ray and not identified a significant finding. 2. The patient does not have a primary care physician. 3. The patient was not referred to the physical therapist by another health care practitioner to receive care from the physical therapist.
Wyoming		Silent on imaging
Virgin Islands		Silent on imaging