



COVID-19 AND THE IMPACT ON THE PHYSICAL THERAPY COMMUNITY

MEMBERS & SCHOOLS WEBINAR

MAY 15, 2020



Federation of State Boards of Physical Therapy

AGENDA

- Introduction – Nancy Kirsch, FSBPT Board President
- Onset through the End of “April” Testing
- July Testing
- Expectations beyond July
- Questions



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INTRODUCTION

- Our mission is important to us and our members
- We value the partnerships and relationship we have with all of our stakeholders
- The stresses on individuals and systems are unprecedented
- Things haven't been done as well as we would like
- We are committed to doing things well and value your input



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ONSET – END OF “APRIL” TESTING



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UNPRECEDENTED DISRUPTIONS TO TESTING

- All April exams were cancelled
 - PT – 4,081
 - PTA – 1,706
 - Law – 1,135
 - TOTAL FSBPT – 5,922

*Total April Displacements
2012 – 2019*

43



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STATUS OF APRIL TEST TAKERS AS OF MAY 13, 2020

	PTA	% of expected	PT	% of expected
Test complete	137	13%	920	25%
Scheduled to test	719	71%	2,474	67%
Not yet scheduled	163	16%	282	8%
TOTAL APRIL EXPECTED	1,019	100%	3,676	100%



COMMUNICATIONS

➤ Candidates with open NPTE registrations

- Emails
- Twitter/Facebook
- Phone calls

➤ Member boards

- Emails
- April 9 WebEx

➤ Schools

- Emails
- Responded to individual emails and phone calls
- This WebEx

➤ Technical Advisory Panel



COMMUNICATIONS

- Development of coronavirus page
 - www.fsbpt.org/coronavirus
- Partners
 - APTA, CAPTE, ACAPT, PTA SIG, ELP
- Prometric
 - Meetings 2-4 times per week
- Other healthcare testing organizations
 - Security roundtable
 - Healthcare regulatory organizations CEO group
 - Peer-to-peer conversations



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COMMUNICATIONS

➤ Public webinar

- Monday 5/18/2020
- Short registration form
- Everyone is welcome
- Different format
- Info is on www.fsbpt.org



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PAIN POINTS

Challenges with Prometric Creating a Plan for Resumption of Testing

- Tremendous number of displaced candidates across programs – 450,000 in 2 months
- Emphasis on essential services programs
- Personal Protective Equipment
- Local/State regulations



PAIN POINTS

Technical Problems with Significant Consequences for Candidates

- Social distancing cancellations
- Center closure cancellations
- Auditing
 - Late cancellations
- Numerous cancellations
- Refund delays



PAIN POINTS

➤ Confusing communications

- Incorrect information in initial cancellation notices from Prometric
- Timing difference between FSBPT and Prometric communications
- Incorrect/slow to update information on Prometric's website

➤ Slow communications

- FSBPT waited to announce plans for April testing

➤ Appointment availability

- Limited seats around the country



RESOLUTIONS/UPDATES ON PAIN POINTS

➤ Message from Prometric

“We recognize that our communications to your test takers and other stakeholders has at times been inadequate and may have caused unnecessary confusion and frustration. In response, we have applied new processes to improve our communication and response times, and continue to work to identify areas for improved service.”



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RESOLUTIONS/UPDATES ON PAIN POINTS

➤ Seat Availability

- Centers continue to open
- Additional seats w/in those centers (greater than 10 people allowed)

➤ Slow Communications

- Many factors to consider

➤ Confusing Communications

- Communications from Prometric to be reviewed by FSBPT prior to distribution to test takers
- Prometric website, open center status, daily updates



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RESOLUTIONS/UPDATES ON PAIN POINTS

➤ Technical Problems

- Substantial remediation on behind the scenes issues
- Cancellations going forward should be done more than 48 hours in advance
- Refunds should be done within 10 days



WHAT IF AN INDIVIDUAL CANNOT FIND A SEAT IN MAY?

- We're still looking at areas where test centers might not open
- Potentially 385 candidates who are currently scheduled who might need to find new seats
- Options pending additional data
 - Paper and pencil
 - June window
 - Wait until July



HOW DOES PROMETRIC HANDLE LAST MINUTE CANCELLATIONS? REIMBURSEMENT POLICY?

- Prometric's [contact us](#) page has been updated
- Reimbursements have been made to FSBPT candidates
- New FAQ on FSBPT website

The screenshot shows the Prometric website's contact-us page. At the top, there is a navigation bar with links for PROMETRIC, COVID-19 UPDATE, TEST TAKERS, TEST OWNERS, REMOTE ASSESSMENT, ABOUT US, and a CONTACT button. Below the navigation bar, there is a green banner with text: "possible. Please also visit our [Frequently Asked Questions](#) page to access answers and information on the most common questions we are receiving during this time. Alternatively, you can [reschedule](#) select exams through our self-serve scheduling system."

The main content area is divided into three sections:

- TEST TAKER FAQ**: Includes a "FAQ" button.
- ARRANGE TESTING ACCOMMODATIONS**: Includes a "REQUEST ACCOMMODATION" button. Below this, there is a form with two dropdown menus: "I am a" (set to "Test Taker") and "I want to" (with a dropdown menu open showing options: "Contact Customer Service", "Register a Complaint", "Register an Appeal", and "Request a Reimbursement").
- NURSE AIDE**: Includes text: "Please search for your state to locate customer service contact information for your area." and a "SEARCH FOR YOUR STATE" button.





JULY TESTING



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STATUS OF JULY EXAMS

➤ Fixed dates still apply

- July 8 (PTA) and July 28 & 29 (PT)
- Blocked seats on the fixed dates
 - ~4,800 seats for PTA
 - ~6,600 seats for PT

➤ Multi-week exam window following the fixed dates

- Three-week window for PTA (July 9 through July 26)
- Four-week window for PT (July 30 through August 31)

Capacity challenges at test centers will continue into July

Window seats are intended to be used only if an individual cannot find an appointment on the assigned fixed date.



STATUS OF JULY TEST TAKERS AS OF MAY 13, 2020

	PTA	PT
Scheduled to test	1,528	2,713
Eligible - Not yet scheduled	496	484

2019 July Volume
PTA – 4,049
PT – 6,345





BEYOND JULY



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PLANS FOR OCTOBER

- Registration is open for October exams
 - Fixed dates - PTA 10/6/2020 | PT 10/27/2020
- We will have large blocks of seats on the fixed dates
 - ~3,500 seats for PT
 - ~2,500 seats for PTA
- Need more info before making any other decisions relative to October
 - Prometric capacity
 - Candidate behavior
 - Status of coronavirus pandemic



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ADVANCE QUESTIONS



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FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

- Why aren't all Prometric centers open?
- Has FSBPT considered substantially modifying the testing program (i.e.: remote proctoring, continuous testing, university proctoring)?
- Will FSBPT continue to waive withdrawal/cancellation fees?
- My program's final clinical rotation is delayed. How will that impact the graduation validation for my students?
- How are states' various systems that have different online/electronic capabilities affecting students? What can be done to help?
- What is Prometric doing to ensure test takers aren't unnecessarily exposed to COVID-19?
- Another testing program is doing things differently? Why aren't you?



WHY AREN'T ALL PROMETRIC CENTERS OPEN?

- Number of factors determine whether a specific center is able to open:
 - Are there state/local government mandates preventing the center from opening?
 - Does the center have the requisite number of staff to maintain secure testing protocols?
 - Does the center have enough personal protective equipment (PPE) and cleaning supplies for staff members?
 - Is the facility owner where the center is located allowing businesses to open?
- These issues can be site specific, which is why some centers in a given market are open, while others remain closed
- If any of the factors above change, it can cause a closed center to open, or result in an open center needing to close



HAS FSBPT CONSIDERED SUBSTANTIALLY MODIFYING THE TESTING PROGRAM (I.E.: REMOTE PROCTORING, CONTINUOUS TESTING, UNIVERSITY PROCTORING)?

- Alternate NPTE delivery options are unlikely to be a realistic solution in the near term
 - Gather stakeholder input
 - Contract with a delivery provider
 - Address technical details to ensure fairness for all candidates
- The NPTE's purpose is to help state PT boards ensure that only individuals with the requisite knowledge of physical therapy are licensed
- FSBPT is committed to working with Prometric to help our candidates take the NPTE safely and securely during this pandemic
- FSBPT is focusing all efforts on working with Prometric to get as many candidates scheduled in the existing test centers as possible



WILL FSBPT CONTINUE TO WAIVE WITHDRAWAL/CANCELLATION FEES?

- Yes
- There will be no cancellation fees for the NPTE for the foreseeable future, including for the July exam



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MY PROGRAM'S FINAL CLINICAL ROTATION IS DELAYED. HOW WILL THAT IMPACT THE GRADUATION VALIDATION FOR MY STUDENTS?

- FSBPT's system allows schools to validate graduation up to 150 days before graduation
- Under the NPTE Policies, students are permitted to sit for the NPTE up to 90 days before graduation
- Unless your graduation date will be delayed more than 90 days, there should be no impact on when you can validate the graduation for your cohort
- Email schools@fsbpt.org if you have specific questions about your cohort



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HOW ARE STATES' VARIOUS SYSTEMS WITH DIFFERENT ONLINE/ELECTRONIC CAPABILITIES AFFECTING STUDENTS? WHAT CAN BE DONE TO HELP?

- Even in the most difficult of times, boards have limited authority to make quick changes
- Many jurisdictions have made significant and unprecedented changes to their policies and procedures to facilitate the licensure process
- We encourage you to reach out to your state board to identify potential pain points that you face. If they don't know about a problem, they can't make a change
- The technologic capabilities of each board is different. Some don't have the infrastructure or the fiscal resources to allow for a more online application process



WHAT IS PROMETRIC DOING TO ENSURE TEST TAKERS AREN'T UNNECESSARILY EXPOSED TO COVID-19?

- Prometric published its social distancing testing procedures
 - Available on Prometric's COVID-19 page – social distancing policies
 - Available through FAQ on FSBPT's website
- Modified arrival and check-in procedures
 - Require candidates to wear a mask
 - Test center staff will have access to masks, gloves, and sanitizing materials
- Proctor & testing room procedures
- End of test procedures
 - All surfaces cleaned between each test taker and at start/end of each day



ANOTHER TESTING PROGRAM IS DOING THINGS DIFFERENTLY? WHY AREN'T YOU?

- Every testing program has its own needs, resources, and challenges
- FSBPT actively communicates with and benchmarks against other entry-level licensing examinations for health care professions
- Many have and are continuing to evaluate remote-proctored testing as a potential solution
- Remote-proctoring is not a viable solution for the NPTE in the foreseeable future





OTHER QUESTIONS



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WHAT ABOUT TEMPORARY LICENSURE AS AN OPTION?

- FSBPT MPA doesn't include language on temporary licensure
- 29 states allow it for 1st time CAPTE Graduates

Jurisdiction Licensure Reference Guide
Topic: Temporary Licensure

fsbpt.net/lrg/Home/TemporaryLicensure

SUMMARY

Individuals Eligible for Temporary License:	
First Time NPTE Candidates (Graduate of CAPTE program)	29
First Time NPTE Candidates (Graduate of non-CAPTE program)	13
Candidates Retaking NPTE	2
Licensing By Endorsement (Graduate of CAPTE program)	10
Licensing By Endorsement (Graduate of non-CAPTE program)	5
Applicant Completing a Supervised Clinical Practice	4
Military Spouse	4
Other	4



FIXED DATES DON'T LINE UP WITH MY NEW GRADUATION DATES. CAN THERE BE DIFFERENT FIXED DATES?

- Fixed dates have been selected to accommodate as many program graduation dates as possible
- If there is flex in the graduation date, there is another fixed date that is approximately 90 days away



ALLOWING TESTING MORE THAN 90 DAYS IN ADVANCE OF GRADUATION?

- Our current policy doesn't allow this
- Some states are now allowing testing prior to graduation which is helpful so more students can take advantage of this opportunity
- FSBPT BOD will be reviewing this
- Doesn't make licensure faster – individuals still must graduate to be licensed



WILL YOU ALLOW CONTINUOUS TESTING FOR THE REST OF THE YEAR?

- No
- This was an option we considered
- Security concerns are far greater when we have continuous testing
- We are hopeful that the fixed dates + windows will allow ample appointment availability
- Continue to monitor



PROMETRIC RESOURCES

- Improved contact us form - www.Prometric.com/contact-us
- COVID 19 Updates Page – www.Prometric.com/corona-virus-update
- Open center list – www.Prometric.com/site-openings
- Social distancing policy
- New feature in development to make rescheduling easier



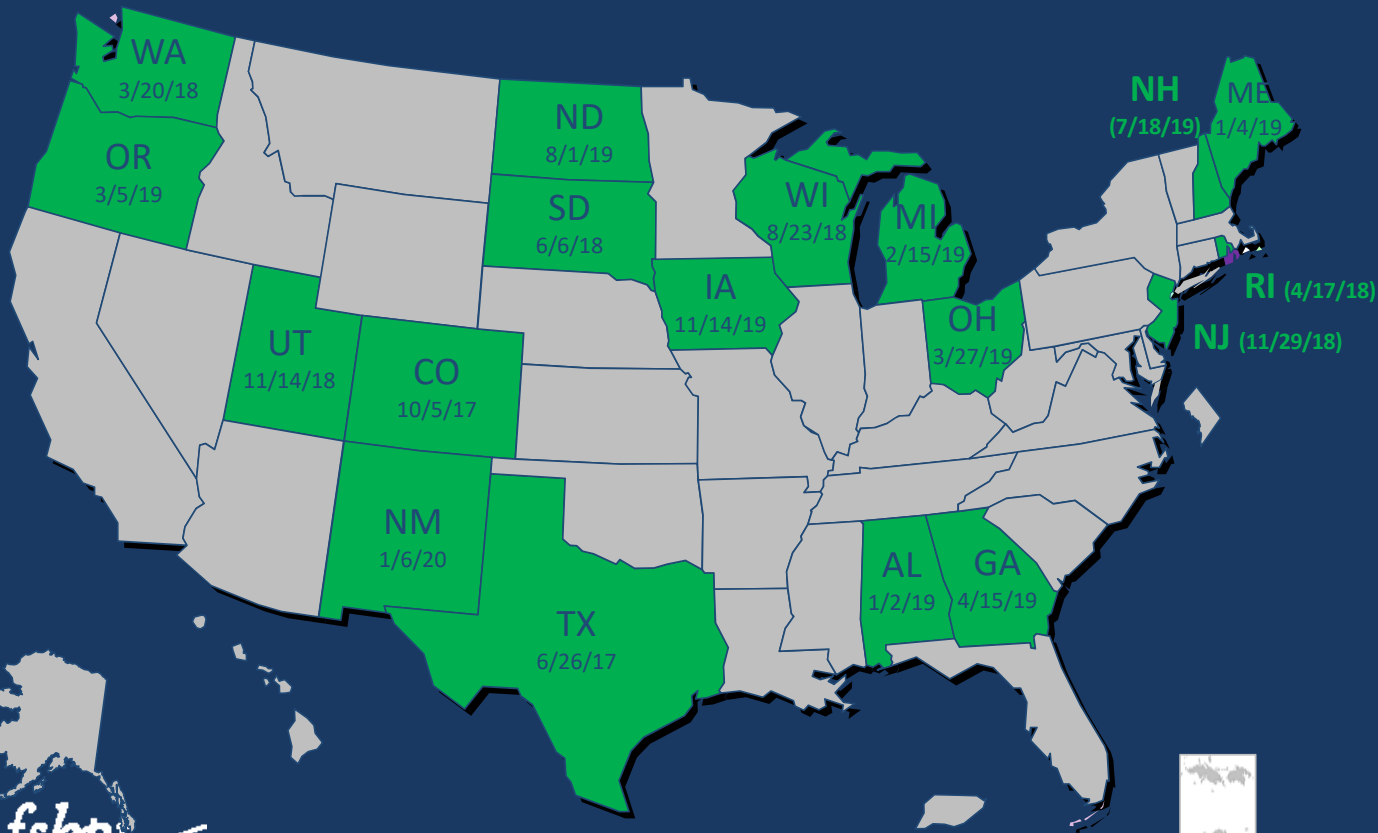
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I AM CURRENTLY REQUIRED TO SEND PROGRAM COMPLETION FOR MY STUDENTS TO THE STATE BOARD. WHAT WILL HAPPEN IF MY SCHOOL REMAINS REMOTE ONLY AND WE ARE UNABLE TO SEND THE PROGRAM COMPLETION DOCUMENTATION TO THE STATE BOARD? (FAQ)

- If your student registers to sit for the NPTE in a state that has opted into FSBPT's alternate approval process (AAP), they will automatically be made eligible to sit for the exam once they register for the NPTE.
- Please note, this doesn't address the board's requirement of proof of program completion to actually determine eligibility for a license.
- Although FSBPT cannot address what will happen if your student registers in a non-AAP jurisdiction, we are working with our member boards to see how they might handle this situation.



STATUS OF ALTERNATE APPROVAL PATHWAY ADOPTION MAY 2020



GREEN – Executed AAP Agreement/Opted In (18)



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CLOSING REMARKS

NANCY KIRSCH



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CONTACT INFORMATION

- School Questions – schools@fsbpt.org
- Student Questions – examregistration@fsbpt.org
- State Questions – communications@fsbpt.org

- General Concerns – communications@fsbpt.org



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