

PHYSICAL THERAPY ASSISTANT

KIND OF WORK

Paraprofessional physical therapy work.

NATURE AND PURPOSE

Under immediate supervision, implements physical therapy treatment programs designed by registered therapists to relieve pain, to upgrade functional capabilities and to reduce the rate of deterioration due to accident or disease; performs related work as required.

EXAMPLES OF WORK (A position may not include all the work examples given, nor does the list include all that may be assigned.)

Prepares patients/residents for treatment by explaining the specific therapy to be received and any discomfort that may result.

Administers active and passive manual exercises; manual massage; and heat; light, sound and water treatments to strengthen and maintain physical capacity of patients by using whirlpools, hot and cold packs, paraffin baths, infra red lamps, ultraviolet lights, ultrasound waves and so on.

Observes patients/residents, compiles and evaluates data regarding physical condition and progress of patients to develop an information base for use in treatment planning by conducting visual study, taking vital signs, using ambulation aids and assisting in measuring range of motion, length and girth of body parts and so on.

Fits, adjusts and trains patients/residents and families in use and care of braces, splints and other ambulatory devices to support and improve physical skills by manually altering the equipment for individual comfort and need, adding weight, building additional supports and reshaping devices.

Recommends changes in design of physical therapy programs to the registered therapist and physician responding to patient/resident progress as assessed through observation.

Provides in-service training to new employees, students and interns on physical therapy practices and procedures to ensure comprehensive application of treatment through lecture, demonstration and so on.

Maintains physical therapy facilities and equipment so that treatment areas are safe, adequately stocked and sanitary by cleaning and testing equipment, ordering supplies and requesting repairs.

Monitors treatments performed by other paraprofessional staff so that therapy services are delivered properly and on schedule through preparation of assignment rosters, observation of treatments in progress and teaching/ coaching staff.

Feeds, bathes and grooms patients/residents - or supervises them in these activities - to ensure their health and well-being.

Provides health care to patients/residents so that response to treatment is not impeded by physical illness through administration of medications/ treatments, taking and monitoring vital signs, intervening when patient behavior is threatening to others or himself/herself.

KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS AND ABILITIES REQUIRED

Knowledge of:

Anatomy and physiology sufficient to assess functions and limitations of skeletal and muscle structure in planning and executing physical therapy programs.

Physical therapy modalities and procedures sufficient to perform manual and sensory treatments prescribed by physicians and developed by a registered therapist.

Transfer techniques sufficient to safely lift, move and position patients/residents.

Client groups (deaf, blind, mentally retarded, mentally ill, chemically dependent, geriatric, and so on) sufficient to permit accommodation for patients/residents in treatment.

Medications and their side effects sufficient to understand their impact on the functional capabilities of patients/residents.

Human development and physical disabilities sufficient to assist with patient/resident evaluations and reports of response to therapy.

The rules, regulations, policies and practices governing delivery of physical therapy sufficient to protect the rights and safety of patients/residents.

Skill in:

Operating physical therapy equipment sufficient to carry out treatment programs developed by the registered therapist.

Ability to:

Modify/adapt ambulatory devices to meet the special needs of patients/residents (redesigning standard orthoses, prostheses and supportive devices).

Observe and document and existing patient/resident conditions and patient/resident response to therapy.

Explain the physical therapy process to patients/residents so that they understand the steps to be taken and possible discomfort during treatment.

Provide and/or supervise patients/residents in performing activities of daily living by tube feeding, attaching adaptive feeding equipment, escorting to and monitoring activities in mealtime routines; by using specialized bathing tables, tubs and bath solutions.

Administer oral medications and health care treatments (such as soaks, topical creams and ointments).

LEGAL LICENSURE REQUIREMENTS (These must be met by all employees prior to attaining permanent status in the class.)

Completion of a two year college or vocational program as a Physical Therapy Assistant.

SPECIAL WORK CONDITIONS

Jobs in this class may require the employee to regularly lift, transfer and position patients/residents. In addition, the employee may be subject to unpredictable and hazardous patient/resident behaviors.

Est.: 11/83
Rev.:

T.C. 4/84
Former Title: Institution Physical Therapy
Assistant