

Agency 5-Year Plan

Issue 1 1.Establish the mechanisms for assessing continuing professional competence of physical therapists to engage in the practice of physical therapy and the competence of physical therapist assistants to work in the field of physical therapy.

Description: a.The Board of physical therapy currently requires licensed physical therapist to complete 20 contact hours of continuing competence activities during each compliance period. The compliance period is two years in length, beginning September 1 of an even numbered year and ending August 31 of the next even numbered year.
b.Certified physical therapist assistants currently have no minimum continuing competence activity requirement.

Solutions:

1.The Board is currently working with the Arizona Physical Therapy Association to update current requirements for continuing competence activities for licensed physical therapists and certified physical therapist assistants.
a.The taskforce working on the matter expects to approach the Board in 2014 with recommended changes to include, a minimum requirement of 10 hours of continuing competence activities.
b.The taskforce also plans the Board require completion of an Arizona Jurisprudence exercise hosted on the agency website as a mandatory condition for completing the renewal process.
c.The earliest implementation of any changes to continuing competence activities requirements would be in the 2018 renewal cycle.
D.On August 27, 2013, the Board announced its intention to change rules to require continuing competence activities for Physical Therapist Assistants. The response to EO 15-01 Rules requiring amendments reflects the need for the change.

Issue 2 2.Regulate the practice of physical therapy by interpreting and enforcing this chapter.

Description: a.The Board received between 50 and 70 complaints per year.
b.The Board currently maintains a 1 FTE to investigate all complaints received against physical therapists, physical therapist assistants, and business entities.
C.The Board has seen an increase in the number of complaints filed beginning in 2009 as well as an increase in the complexity of the cases.

Solutions:

2.The Board has evaluated its current investigative resources and identified a lack of time and manpower as the greatest contributor to recent back logs in adjudicating complaints.

The Board has seen marked improvement in investigations completeness time frames. However, a backlog of formal hearings remains. The Board is working to resolve the matter with the Office of Attorney General. We are considering a onetime spending increase in FY 2016 to have the OAG dedicate more resources to the backlogged cases and clear them in FY 2016. The funding for the one time expenditure has been received and implemented. However, the Board and the Attorney General's Office feel the increased expenditures to address cases at the formal hearing level needs the funding to become permanent. An FY 2017 decision package will be submitted.

Issue 3 3.Evaluate the qualifications of applicants for licensure and certification; and provide for national examinations for physical therapists and physical therapist assistants and adopt passing scores for these examinations.

Description: a.The Board has seen an increase in the number of application filed in any calendar year from 500 in 2009 to 600+ in 2011. In addition, the number of physical therapists renewing active licenses increased by over 500 from 2008 to 2012. Physical therapist assistant renewals increased by over 400. The space available in the agency office to house the increased number of applications has been reached maximum capacity. In calendar year 2014 the Board received 810 applications in total, which is an increase of 64% in five years.
b.The national examinations for physical therapist and physical therapist assistants have been changed from tests given on a continuous basis on almost every day of the year to tests provided only four times each per year.

Solutions:

3.The Board physical therapy is currently addressing the need for improved processes for the increased number of applicants and the change in their availability of national tests.
a. On March 15, 2012, changes in the timing of allowing applicants to attempt passage of their national examinations were signed into law. A.R.S. §32-2024 was modified to allow applicants to test for their national examinations before completing their full educational programs, which allows increased options in taking one or more of the four tests allowed per year. The average time awaiting licensure from the time it is administratively complete dropped to 7.2 days in FY 2013.
b.The Board is tracking applicants using the early testing option to ensure unforeseen consequences do not out way the benefit of increased testing options. From March 2012 to August 1, 2014 275 applicants tested before graduation with 21 failures.
C.The Board has implemented a new preapproval process for all applicants. The process allows most applicants to receive approve for licensure or certification once the application is complete with the exception of test scores and receipt of transcripts. The process allows licensure or certification to be issued upon receipt of these final applicant requirements.
D. The Board will be requesting in its FY 2017 budget submission approval for an appropriation increase to acquire e-Licensing software solution to better increase consumer access to Board services online, receive payments online, and process services such as applications online.

Resource Assumptions

	FY2018 Estimate	FY2019 Estimate	FY2020 Estimate
Full-Time Equivalent Positions	4.0	4.0	4.0
General Fund	0.0	0.0	0.0
Other Appropriated Funds	494,000.0	494,000.0	494,000.0
Non-Appropriated Funds	0.0	0.0	0.0
Federal Funds	0.0	0.0	0.0

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b.Certified physical therapist assistants currently have no minimum continuing competence activity requirement. In 2016 Arizona passed legislation to join the Physical Therapy Licensure Compact a requirement to impliment the Compact will be adding physical therapist assistants to the continuing professional competence program. A request to allow the rulmaking changes to impliment this change will be made to the Governor's Office in September 2016.

Solutions:

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a.The taskforce working on the matter expects to approach the Board in 2014 with recommended changes to include, a minimum requirement of 10 hours of continuing competence activities.
b.The taskforce also plans the Board require completion of an Arizona Jurisprudence exercise hosted on the agency website as a mandatory condition for completing the renewal process.
c.The earliest implementation of any changes to continuing competence activities requirements would be in the 2018 renewal cycle.
D.On August 27, 2013, the Board announced its intention to change rules to require continuing competence activities for Physical Therapist Assistants. The response to EO 15-01 Rules requireing amendments reflects the need for the change. With the requirements in the Physical Therapy Licensure Compact we anticipate this change will be ready for the 2018 or 2020 renewal cycles.

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b.The Board currently maintains a 1 FTE to investigate all complaints received against physical therapists, physical therapist assistants, and business entities.
C.The Board has seen an increase in the number of complaints filed beginning in 2009 as well as an increase in the complexity of the cases. However, in 2016 we saw a decrease in the number of complaints filed. We will be tracking these figures and monitoring the numbers. The Board believes its efforts at education of students, licensees and certificate holders is contributing to a reduction of cases being forwarded to the Board.

Solutions:

2.The Board has evaluated its current investigative resources and identified a lack of time and manpower as the greatest contributor to recent back logs in adjudicating complaints.

The Board has seen marked improvement in investigations completeness time frames. However, a backlog of formal hearings remains. The Board has increased its ISA for a half time AAG designated to the Board of Physical Therapy. The backlog of cases has been reduced and is anticipated to be resolved in 2017.

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D. The Board received approval in FY 2017 for an appropriation increase to acquire e-Licensing software solution to better increase consumer access to Board services online, receive payments online, and process services such as applications online. The Board is participating in the Statewide Enterprise eLicensing project to identify a system that works for the Board and other state agencies. In FY 2016, the Board completed a process to document all agency functions and system operations, which was one of the contibuting documents for the Statewide Enterprise eLicensing project.

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