

SUPERVISION OF ASSISTIVE PERSONNEL, PATIENT CARE MANAGEMENT AND DOCUMENTATION REQUIREMENTS

Pursuant to A.R.S. §32-2043, Supervision; patient care management, Arizona licensed physical therapists are responsible for all care provided to their patients, whether the care is provided by the therapist or by assistive personnel under that therapist's supervision.

Selected acts, tasks, or procedures may be delegated to assistive personnel (physical therapist assistants, physical therapy aides or other assistive personnel) by the supervising physical therapist pursuant to A.R.S. §32-2043(A). The supervising physical therapist is responsible for:

- Verifying the qualifications of the physical therapist assistants, aides and other assistive personnel [A.R.S. §32-2043(G)];
- Knowing the education, training and skill level of the physical therapist assistants, aides and other assistive personnel [A.R.S. §32-2043(A) and (G)];
- For each patient on each date of service, determining when selected acts, tasks, or procedures may be delegated to assistive personnel to ensure that the care provided is safe, effective and efficient [A.R.S. §32-2043(A) and (H)];
- Ensuring that delegated tasks do not exceed the education and training of the assistive personnel [A.R.S. §32-2043(A) and (G)];
- Documenting the clinical rationale for utilizing assistive personnel and delegating selected acts, tasks, or procedures to assistive personnel [A.R.S. §32-2043(H)].

A.A.C. R4-24-303(c) limits the number of assistive personnel a licensed physical therapist can supervise. Physical therapist students and physical therapist assistant students satisfying supervised clinical education requirements in entry-level professional education programs approved by the board are assistive personnel and are included in the limitations detailed in A.A.C. R4-24-303(c). In addition, interim permit holders participating in a supervised clinical practice period approved by the board are included in the limitations detailed in A.A.C. R4-24-303(c).

For all treatment interventions that require the expertise of a physical therapist, the therapist must provide and document those interventions in accordance with A.R.S. §32-2043(H).

Care provided to patients by a physical therapist assistant must be documented by the physical therapist assistant. The supervising physical therapist's co-signature is not required provided the therapist has complied with A.R.S. §32-2043 by verifying the education, training and skills of the physical therapist assistant and determining whether the care provided by that physical therapist assistant will be safe, effective and efficient for that patient on that date of service. The supervising physical therapist's responsibilities for patient care management include accurate documentation and billing of the services provided even if those services were provided by assistive personnel [A.R.S. §32-2043(J)].

A physical therapist must provide on-site supervision of the following:

- Interim permit holders [A.R.S. §32-2043(D)]
- Physical therapist students [A.R.S. §32-2043(E)]
- Physical therapist assistant students [A.R.S. §32-2043(E)]
- Physical therapy aides (sometimes described as "technicians" or "techs") A.R.S. §32-2043(C)]

Beginning September 21, 2006 a physical therapist may provide on-site or general supervision to a physical therapist assistant pursuant to A.R.S. §32-2043(B). If general supervision is provided, the supervising physical therapist must comply with all other requirements of A.R.S. §32-2043.

A physical therapist is exclusively responsible for performing and documenting:

- The initial evaluation for each patient [A.R.S. §32-2043(F)(1)];
- Periodic reevaluation of each patient [A.R.S. §32-2043(F)(2)];
- All of the therapeutic intervention that requires the physical therapist's expertise [A.R.S. §32-2043(H)];
- Accurate documentation and billing of the services provided [A.R.S. §32-2043(J)].
- The discharge of each patient, including the response to treatment at the time of discharge [A.R.S. §32-2043(F)(3)].

Physical therapist students participating in professional education programs approved by the board and interim permit holders participating in a supervised clinical practice period approved by the board may participate in the initial evaluation and documentation for a patient, the periodic reevaluation and documentation of a patient, and the documented discharge of a patient, including the response to therapeutic intervention at the time of discharge.

Arizona Administrative Code R4-24-303. Patient Care Management prescribes additional requirements.