

Pennsylvania Health Care Association

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October 13, 2011

Mr. Thomas Blackburn
Regulatory Unit Counsel
Pennsylvania Department of State
P.O. Box 2649
Harrisburg, PA 17105-2649

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Re: Regulation No. 16A-6514

Dear Mr. Blackburn:

Please accept the following comments to the proposed rulemaking, "State Board of Physical Therapy", submitted on behalf of the Pennsylvania Health Care Association (PHCA) and Center for Assisted Living Management (CALM). PHCA/CALM represents approximately 325 long term care and senior service providers throughout Pennsylvania.

Our members offer care and services along the full continuum, including retirement housing with services, assisted living residences, personal care homes and nursing care facilities. Our members employ hundreds of physical therapist and physical therapist assistants which provide a very valuable service to the residents under their care.

PHCA/CALM would like to begin by commending the Board on the proposed regulatory provisions. Based on our review the proposed regulation is consistent with and generally reflects the intent of Act 38 of 2008. We do however have one concern which we have highlighted below.

Section 40.171 (c) – Scope of Activities. This section requires a student in a physical therapist assistant program to be counted along with a physical therapist assistant when determining compliance with the permitted ratio of three physical therapist assistants to one physical therapist.

PHCA/CALM does not believe that this was the intent of Act 38. The Act specifically states, "A licensed physical therapist shall not supervise more than three physical therapist assistants at any time." The Act does not include physical therapist assistant students in this language, and we question why the Board has done so.

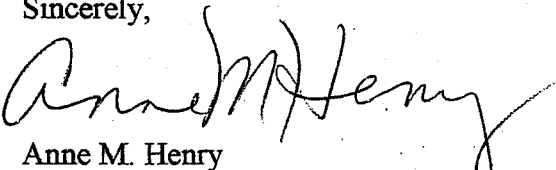
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More importantly, PHCA/CALM is deeply concerned that this requirement will have unintended consequences. With Pennsylvania's aging population, the demand for therapy services for rehabilitation will only increase, intensifying the need for trained physical therapist assistants. Given this, we question whether it is good public policy for the Board to create an environment that could make it difficult for a physical therapist assistant student to find a site to complete the clinical portion of their training.

PHCA/CALM strongly recommends that the Board amend § 40.171 (c) in the final regulation to make it consistent with the language in Act 38 and remove the reference to a student in a physical therapist assistant program.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on this proposed regulation. If you have any questions regarding our comments please contact me at 717-221-7930.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Anne M. Henry". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized initial "A".

Anne M. Henry
Chief Operating Officer

cc: Ms. Sabina Howell