



Division of Registrations Office of Physical Therapy Licensure

May 2, 2011

Director's Position Statement 001

Physical Therapists and "Play or No Play" Decisions

THE DIRECTOR'S POSITION:

The Director for the Office of Physical Therapy Licensure has determined that licensed Physical Therapists may make "play or no play" decisions at athletic events, except as limited by SB11-040.

BASIS FOR THE DIRECTOR'S POSITION:

Section 12-41-103(6), C.R.S., in pertinent part, defines physical therapy as follows:

(6)(a)(I) "Physical therapy" means the examination, treatment, or instruction of patients and clients to detect, assess, prevent, correct, alleviate, or limit physical disability, movement dysfunction, bodily malfunction, or pain from injury, disease, and other bodily conditions.

(II) For purposes of this article "physical therapy" includes:

* * *

(B) The planning, administration, evaluation, and modification of treatment and instruction;

(C) The use of physical agents, measures, activities, and devices for preventive and therapeutic purposes, subject to the requirements of section 12-41-113; [and]

* * *

(E) The provision of consultative, educational, and other advisory services for the purpose of reducing the incidence and severity of physical disability, movement dysfunction, bodily malfunction, and pain.

The statutory definition clarifies that physical therapy includes the treatment or instruction of patients to prevent, alleviate, or limit bodily malfunction or pain. The definition includes the use of measures for preventative purposes. As such, "play or no play" decisions in an athletic

environment are within the scope of practice for licensed physical therapists. However, the scope of practice is limited by SB11-040 (the Act).

Generally, the Act (to be codified at C.R.S. § 25-43-101, *et seq.*) requires that a youth athlete who is removed from play due to a suspected concussion may not return to play without written clearance from a health care provider. The Act's list of health care providers does *not* include physical therapists. Because the Act does not apply to all athletes in all circumstances, physical therapists should consult the Act to make necessary determinations governing particular circumstances.