



Dora
Department of Regulatory Agencies

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PHYSICAL THERAPY ASSISTANTS Frequently Asked Questions

PHYSICAL THERAPY ASSISTANTS (“PTAs”) will be certified in Colorado by the Department of Regulatory Agencies (“DORA”) as of June 1, 2012. This is an exciting time to be a PTA! My name is Deann Conroy and I am the Program Director for the State Physical Therapy Board. I am delighted to have this opportunity to work with Colorado PTAs.

PTA certification is currently being implemented. The new State Physical Therapy Board will soon be seated and then rules will be adopted. More information will be available in early 2012. Continue to check the State Physical Therapy Board’s website, and until then, here is a list of Frequently Asked Questions and the answers for your information.

What is my responsibility as a Physical Therapist Assistant now that Colorado has a PTA certification program?

It is the responsibility of every Physical Therapy Assistant to comply with the Physical Therapists’ Act under Part 2 – Physical Therapist Assistant, as well as the rules that govern this profession. This information will be available on the Board’s website at www.dora.state.co.us/physical-therapy. There, you will be able to download and print the documents for easy review and reference.

What do I have to do to become a certified PTA in Colorado?

In order to be certified as a PTA in Colorado, the statutes state that every applicant must:

- (1) Have successfully completed a PTA program accredited by the Commission on Accreditation in Physical Therapy Education, or another comparable organization as determined by the Board, or qualify to take the NPTE physical therapy examination; **AND**
- (2) Pass a written examination approved by the Board and accredited by a nationally recognized accrediting agency.

Alternatively, a PTA can be certified if the PTA has at least five years’ experience practicing as a PTA or as otherwise qualified as determined by the Board.



In addition, every applicant must submit a complete application and fee to DORA. Rules still need to be adopted by the new State Physical Therapy Board.

What is the date by which I need to be certified in Colorado?

You need to be certified by June 1, 2012. The Division of Registrations is currently drafting the application. We hope to have it on the website in early 2012.

How much is the certification application processing fee?

We do not have the current fee determined yet. The Director of the Division of Registrations has the authority to set the fee. The amount of the fee will appear on the PTA application.

Can I apply online?

No. Online applications for initial certification are not currently available. The application will be downloadable from the website, but will need to be printed out and submitted with the fee by mail. However, when it is time to renew your certification, the renewal process is entirely automated online.

Will I be able to check the status of my application online once I have submitted it?

Yes. You may access the Division homepage at www.dora.state.co.us/registrations and click on the button on the left labeled "Online Registration Services". You will be asked to set up an account and password to protect your privacy.

How long does it take to process my application?

The length of time required to process an application varies, and is largely dependent on the applicant's submission of all documentation necessary to complete the application. If the application is incomplete, the applicant will be notified of the deficiency. It then depends on how quickly the necessary information/documentation is submitted.

How can I make sure my application is complete when I submit it?

The PTA application that will be posted on the website in early 2012 contains a detailed checklist of items which each PTA applicant must submit in order for the application to be considered complete. If you are missing any of those required items when you submit your application, the Office of Licensing within the Division of Registrations will notify you. The Office of Licensing will not be able to process your application for PTA certification until all items are submitted.

I don't have access to a computer. Is there another place besides the website to get information?

You may contact DORA by calling 303.894.7800. We are happy to answer any questions you have.

I am already registered as a physical therapist assistant in another state. Do I need to be certified in Colorado?

Yes. Physical Therapy Assistants working in Colorado will need to be certified in Colorado as of June 1, 2012. You may qualify to be certified by endorsement. Sec. 12-41-206, C.R.S. lists the qualifications in order to be certified in this manner. Please note that there may be rules promulgated by the new State Physical Therapy Board to clarify endorsement qualifications. Keep checking the DORA website for the most up-to-date information.

What if I completed a PTA program in another country other than the United States?

Foreign-trained applicants may also apply for certification, but there are different procedures. Sec. 12-41-207, C.R.S. addresses the specific requirements. This information will also be available on the website.

Do I need a criminal background check to be certified as a PTA?

No, you do not need to submit to a criminal background check to be certified as a PTA.

Is it acceptable for me to use the title “Physical Therapist Assistant”?

After June 1, 2012, only those who have been certified in Colorado by the State Physical Therapy Board may use the title “physical therapist assistant” or use the letters “P.T.A.”

Once I am certified as a PTA, do I still need to be supervised by a licensed physical therapist?

Yes. The statute states that a physical therapist assistant shall not practice physical therapy unless the assistant works under the supervision of a licensed physical therapist. Sec. 12-41-203(2), C.R.S. This information will also be listed on the website.

I want to be sure to stay in good standing with the Board. What are some actions that would subject a PTA to disciplinary action?

The entire list of grounds for possible disciplinary actions is found in Sec. 12-41-210, C.R.S., which can be accessed on the Physical Therapy Board's website at www.dora.state.co.us/physical-therapy. The grounds for discipline include, but are not limited to: (1) any type of sexual contact with a patient, (2) abandoning a patient, (3) making incorrect entries, or not making essential entries, or falsifying information on a patient's medical record, (4) committing insurance fraud, (5) performing medical treatment which is outside your scope of practice, and (6) falsifying any information on your application for certification. Discipline measures are taken very seriously by the Board. Please make sure you are completely aware of the entire list of possible disciplinary actions.