

Reimbursement Corner — Supervision of physical therapy aides

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I am routinely asked to clarify supervision requirements for out-patient care as it relates to unlicensed personnel. Let's start with the administrative code that implements our state practice act:

645-200.6 (3) Supervision of other assistive personnel. PTs are responsible for patient care provided by assistive personnel under their supervision. Physical therapy aides and other assistive personnel shall not provide independent patient care unless each of the following standards is satisfied:

a. The supervising physical therapist has physical participation in the patient's treatment or evaluation, or both each treatment day.

b. The assistive personnel may provide independent patient care only while under the on-site supervision of the supervising PT.

ON-SITE supervision means that the supervising physical therapist shall:

- **Be continuously on site and present in the department or facility where the assistive personnel are performing services.**
- **Be immediately available to assist the person being supervised in the services being performed; and**
- **Provide continued direction of appropriate aspects of**

each treatment session in which a component of treatment is delegated to the assistive personnel.

c. Documentation made in physical therapy records by unlicensed assistive personnel shall be consigned by the supervising PT; and

d. The physical therapist provides periodic reevaluation of assistive personnel's performance in relation to the patient.

The Practice Act goes on to address the supervision of aides by physical therapist assistants:

645-200.6 (6) Other assistive personnel. Physical therapy aides and other assistive personnel may assist a PTA in providing patient care in the absence of a PT only if the PTA maintains insight supervision of the physical therapy aide or assistive personnel and the PTA is primarily and significantly involved in that patient's care.

IN-SIGHT supervision means that the supervising PTA shall maintain visual supervision of the physical therapy aide or assistive personnel at all times.

Finally... recall that the state practice act is in fact the lowest threshold of supervision required. In many cases, including Medicare and some private insurers, the threshold delivery of care is higher. Hence in the case of Medicare, unlicensed personnel are not allowed to provide any billable services in an out-patient setting.