

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Francisco Maia, PT, DPT, CCRT

We just got back from CSM and it was great to attend it in person once again after 3 years! We have continued to see a tremendous amount of interest from physical therapists and students on animal physical therapy, and it was great to network and chat with so many of them at the exhibit hall and during our Q&A session.

For this issue we have some exciting news to share with you from our former president, Kirk Peck. There is always a lot happening behind the scenes to keep moving our field forward, especially when it comes to legislation and politics. Kirk wrote the article below summarizing his accomplishments with FSBPT, and I would like to continue to bring attention to California. Stay tuned on social media and through email blasts as we will very soon be sending some call-to-actions to gather your support, which will be much needed! As you can imagine it costs money to fight legislative battles, quite a bit of money in fact, and although our SIG has worked with Karen to help secure as many funds as we can for her coalition, we could use your help! Please follow the link below to a GoFundMe page and donate and share as much and as many times as you can. No amount is small enough as every little bit helps and sharing it with your friends on social media can help spread the word even more!

<https://gofund.mel2330cdad>

Thank you,
Francisco Maia, PT, DPT, CCRT
Animal PT SIG President
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ANIMAL PHYSICAL THERAPY ACHIEVES LANDMARK RECOGNITION BY THE FSBPT

Kirk Peck, PT, PhD, CSCS, CCRT, CERP

Before I share some fantastic news about a new development related to animal physical therapy in support of political advocacy, some foundational context is necessary. Founded in 1987, the Federation of State Boards of Physical Therapy (FSBPT) embraces an organizational mission: "To protect the public by providing service and leadership that promote safe and competent physical therapy practice." (source: FSBPT.org). As part of its mission, the FSBPT provides invaluable resources to state physical therapy licensure boards. This includes but is not limited to enhancing the profession's ability to regulate and support continuing competencies for practicing physical therapists, and of course, all physical therapists and physical therapist assistants are aware of the National PT Licensure Exam that is also under the Federation's purview.

There is one key document the Federation created that has been successfully used by many state physical therapist associations

over the years to revise and update physical therapist scope of practice language. The document is known as the Federation of State Boards of Physical Therapy Model Practice Act (MPA). The MPA was first implemented by the Federation in 1997, marking an incredible milestone for the physical therapy profession. Several revisions to the MPA have occurred over the past 25 years, culminating in the most recent 7th edition, published in late 2022.

As luck would have it, I was serving as Chair of the FSBPT Legislative and Ethics Committee when the topic of suggesting proposed language to revise the MPA was first introduced. I therefore took advantage of a perfect opportunity to submit suggested language to include animal physical therapy, along with other revisions, as part of the document. Although I was termed off the committee before finalizing the initial draft, a few colleagues retained my passion for including animal physical therapy resulting in a positive outcome. What is unique about the MPA, 7th edition is that for the first time in history animal physical therapy is not only mentioned, but supported as a practice option.

The newly adopted Federation's definition for "Patient/Client Care Management" in the MPA includes a clause and corresponding commentary that addresses the practice of animal physical therapy.

Article 4: Regulation of Physical Therapy: Section 4.03 Patient/Client Care Management of the MPA states,

G. Nothing in this [Act] shall prohibit a licensee [certificate holder] from providing physical therapy to animals for which the licensee [certificate holder] has completed the education and training as further established by rule. (Pp 12)

In corresponding "Commentary" related to Section 4.03 the MPA states,

The practice of physical therapy continues to evolve including the treatment of animals. While there is currently no consistent standard of specified education and training, it is appropriate to note that additional rule development in a jurisdiction may address minimum standards to demonstrate competency to provide physical therapy to animals. (Pp 53)

The revised language in the MPA is truly monumental for the practice of animal physical therapy. Not since the APTA House of Delegates initially adopted an official *Position Statement* in 1993 supporting collaborative relationships between physical therapists and veterinarians has something this historic been implemented by a national organization affiliated with the profession. The key aspect of the language is that it now offers support from not only the APTA, but the FSBPT as well, for state jurisdictions to

develop and implement statutes and regulations, in addition to appropriate education, to allow for the practice of animal physical therapy. The MPA has become a vital tool to be used by state physical therapy associations and legislative bodies to create legal language for this exciting area of clinical practice.

Finally, it should be noted that acquiring some level of support for animal physical therapy as officially codified in the FSBPT MPA meets one of the key political strategic planning goals for the Animal Physical Therapy SIG. Although a great deal of work remains to encourage all 50 states, versus only the current few (CO, NE, NV, and UT), to codify their own statutes and regulations, at least those willing to accept the initiative to revise scope of physical therapist practice laws now have an outstanding document to facilitate the process.

Dr. Peck is past APTSIG President of the APTSIG (2013-19) and current SIG liaison to the World Physiotherapy Animal PT Network. He is a core instructor in the University of Tennessee Certification Program in Equine Rehabilitation and collaborates with local veterinarians in providing PT services for canine clients. Dr. Peck is current Chair of the Department of Physical Therapy at Creighton University, Omaha, NE, where he teaches topics in clinical exercise physiology and political advocacy.

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