

Titles, Credentials, and Specialty Designations

A Practice Resource for Saskatchewan Physical Therapists

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The purpose of this practice resource is to provide direction to Saskatchewan Physical Therapists in utilizing professional title, credentials, and specialist designations to ensure they:

- are clear and understandable to clients, the public, and other professionals
- respect title legislation and other credentialing regulations



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Summary

The effective use of title, credentials, and other designations is required to ensure physical therapists clearly identify themselves and their credentials to their clients, the public, and other health care providers.

The following summarizes the use of title and other designations:

- Title refers to the words '**Physiotherapist**', '**Physical Therapist**', or the abbreviation '**PT**'.
- Physical therapists providing physical therapy care in clinical practice are expected to use their protected title in all professional actions and interactions, listing it immediately after their name and before academic or other credentials.
- Physical therapists practicing under a restricted license use the title '**Physical Therapist RES**', '**Physiotherapist RES**', or '**PT RES**'.
- Members registered as non-practicing or former member (i.e. inactive) may not use title.
- Physical therapy academic credentials may be included after the professional title, and this may be followed by any other recognized credentials in a manner understood or defined for the public.
- Dr. may be used for research/academic purposes but may not be used in clinical care environments.
- For non-PT services and complementary or alternative care physical therapists:
 - must keep their roles, titles, credentials, documentation, and billing practice separate and distinct.
 - may not use title.
 - must ensure that clients are aware of any provided services that do not fall under physical therapy, and they must not hold themselves out to be a physical therapist when providing this care.
- Physical therapists are expected to report the unauthorized use of their protected title to the Saskatchewan College of Physical Therapists.

Relevant Legislation, Bylaws, Standards, and Ethical Considerations

The Saskatchewan College of Physical Therapists (SCPT) developed this practice resource to provide guidance and support for members in the use of title. This document is a resource only and information may not apply to individual circumstances. Members are expected to be familiar with all regulatory requirements to ensure Saskatchewan residents receive safe, competent, ethical, quality physical therapy care.

[The Physical Therapists Act, 1998](#)

Section 21 – Protection of Title

[SCPT Regulatory Bylaws](#)

SCPT Bylaw 4 – Practising membership
SCPT Bylaw 4.1 – Extended access membership
SCPT Bylaw 5 – Restricted practising membership
SCPT Bylaw 6 – Academic practising membership
SCPT Bylaw 7 – Non-practising membership
SCPT Bylaw 8 – Temporary Practising membership
SCPT Bylaw 22 – Alternative Therapies
SCPT Bylaw 23 – Multi-disciplinary practices

[Standards of Practice for Physiotherapists in Saskatchewan](#)

Standard 21 Use of Title
Standard 1 Advertising
Standard 13 Legislative Responsibilities
Standard 20 Telerehabilitation

Related Standards:

Standard 2 Client Assessment, Diagnosis, Interventions
Standard 9 Documentation & Record Keeping
Standard 11 Fees & Billing

[Code of Ethical Conduct for Canadian Physiotherapists](#)

Introduction

The use of **title** and other **credentials** is an important aspect of how physical therapists clearly identify themselves to clients, other health-care providers, and the public. Title also recognizes a physical therapist's valid and/or current licensing status with the Saskatchewan College of Physical Therapists (SCPT).

Physical therapists are obligated to ensure that they represent their title and credentials in a manner that is transparent, accurate, verifiable, and is meaningful and not misleading to the public.

Legislative, Regulatory and Ethical Considerations

The use of title and other credentials is regulated through [The Physical Therapists Act, 1998](#).

Protection of title

21 No person other than a member shall use the title "Physiotherapist", "Physical Therapist", the abbreviation "P.T.", or any word, title, or designation, abbreviated or otherwise, to imply that the person is a member.

The performance expectations in the [SCPT Standard of Practice Use of Title](#) requires that only a physical therapists on the SCPT active practice register will use protected title. There is also the expectation that physical therapists identify themselves in a manner that facilitates clear identification during physical therapy service delivery, in a way that is appreciated and understood by clients, the public, and other health care providers.

Reference is also made in the [Code of Ethical Conduct for Physical Therapists in Canada](#)

A. Responsibilities to the Client

- 7. Treat clients only when the diagnosis or continuation of the intervention warrants treatment and is not contraindicated.*
- 12. Practice in a safe, competent, accountable, and responsible manner during the provision of services.*
- 18. Comply with all legislation, guidelines, and regulatory requirements that pertain to the profession of physiotherapy.*

B. Responsibilities to the Public

- 1. Conduct and present themselves with integrity and professionalism.*

C. Responsibilities to Self and the Profession

- 2. Commit to maintain and enhancing the reputation and standing of the physiotherapy profession, and to inspiring public trust and confidence by treating everyone with dignity and respect in all interactions.*
- 3. Act honestly, transparently and with integrity in all professional and business practices to uphold the reputation of the profession.*

Title and Other Credentials

Title includes the words 'Physiotherapist', 'Physical Therapist' or the abbreviation 'PT', an equivalent term in another language or, any other word that would imply the person is a current member of the Saskatchewan College of Physical Therapists (SCPT) licensed to practice.

Physical therapists working in clinical practice and performing physical therapy assessment and treatment techniques are expected to use their protected title in all professional actions and interactions, listing it immediately after their name and before academic or other credentials.

Physical therapists with restricted licenses use the title '**Physical Therapist RES**', '**Physiotherapist RES**', or '**PT RES**'.

Using protected title when engaged in activities outside of the practice of physical therapy is not allowed and clear distinction must be made to the client, the public, and other health care providers regarding what is and is not considering physical therapy.

Licensing Designations

Not all members of the SCPT are allowed to use title. A member is entitled to use title if they hold an active license under the membership categories of:

- Practicing
- Restricted Practicing
- Extended Access
- Academic Practicing
- Temporary Practicing

These members are entitled to use the title 'Physiotherapist' or 'Physical Therapist' or any other word, title, or designation, whether or not abbreviated, to indicate that the individual is practicing as a member of the college; restricted practicing membership use title with RES following to indicate RESIDENT.

Members in the Non-Practicing membership category and those who are former members (i.e. inactive) may not use title.

For further information on categories of licensing refer to SCPT Regulatory Bylaws 3-9.

Academic Credentials

Academic credentials refer to words or abbreviations that indicate an academic qualification from an accredited university program granted authority to provide that designation.

Academic credentials related to physical therapy are noted immediately following title and may be followed by any other academic credentials from a recognized academic post-secondary institution. These credentials must be written in a clear manner and when abbreviations are used, these must be consistent with what is recommended and/or approved by the educational organization responsible for those credentials - for example, Name, Physical Therapist, MPT, BScKin.

Using the title 'doctor' or 'Dr.' preceding your name when providing physical therapy care in clinical environments may be confusing to clients and other caregivers and its use is therefore not allowed. As with all credentials, the conferred doctoral degree may be noted after your name and PT title. The term 'Dr' should not appear on anything a client would receive or see during their patient care experience.

The title Dr. may be used for research or academic purposes in non-client care settings. For example, Dr. Dorothy Gale, Physical Therapist, BScPT, MSc, PhD.

Other educational credentials may be included, but physical therapists are encouraged to consider how multiple acronyms following your professional title and academic credentials may be confusing for the public. Communicating additional educational achievements must be provided in a manner that is understood by the public and it is recommended that further information defining any acronyms used be included on the practitioner's website and within information for clients.

Clinicians may not use professional association, society, or body membership as credentials for example, MCPA (member of the CPA).

Physical Therapy Students

In Saskatchewan physical therapy students participating in university-based education programs do not hold a license and are not required to be members of the SCPT. During clinical placements they identify with the credentials MPT Student.



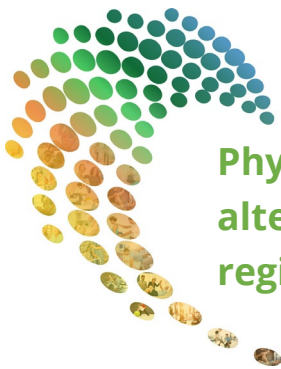
Physical Therapists providing clinical care must indicate their protected title immediately following their signature, on all correspondence and documentation.

Multiple Disciplines, Alternative or Complementary Care

When providing care that is not considered physical therapy practice, members must:

- ensure that, if practicing more than one regulated discipline or other non-physical therapy service, they keep their roles, titles, credentials, documentation, and billing practice separate and distinct.
- not use title when providing non-physical therapy complementary or alternative care.
- ensure clients are aware when they are not providing services as a physical therapist and ensure clients are aware of what service is and is not physical therapy.

For an example, please see the [relevant FAQ](#).



Physical Therapists may not use title in providing alternative or complementary care or when registered as non-practicing with the SCPT.

FAQs

Q: A colleague and I are having a debate about the requirements for credentials following my name when signing a patient chart note in our hospital where we both work. I sign my name followed by my academic credentials "MPT". My colleague follows his name with "PT". Who is correct?

A: When practicing in a clinical setting where you are providing physical therapy care to clients you must at the minimum follow your name with your protected title "Physical Therapist", "Physiotherapist", or "PT". You may then follow your protected title with your physical therapy academic credentials if you wish.

Q: I have just recently completed the requirements to be fully licensed as a physical therapist with the SCPT. I have seen a lot of different variations of how my title and credentials should be displayed on our clinic website and my business cards and am uncertain of this. I graduated from the U of S MPT program and prior to that held a combined degree in kinesiology and education. How do I display my title and credentials correctly?

A: When practicing in a clinical setting and providing physical therapy care to clients, members must designate as follows: Name, title, PT related academic credentials, other academic credentials. So, in your case Name, Physical Therapist, MPT, B.Sc. (Kin.)/B.Ed.

Q: I have recently completed my PhD and would like to use the title Dr before my name when completing research in a non-client care setting. Am I allowed to do so, and can I also use the title physical therapist?

A: Yes, you may use your credentials of Dr before your name when you are not providing client care such as for research/academic purposes and other non-client care settings. You may use the title physical therapist if you meet the use of title legislation.

Q: I work in a private clinic where we provide yoga, pilates, and conditioning classes for the general public. The participants have not been assessed by a physical therapist, but the course is taught by a physical therapist. Can the programs be promoted as physical therapy, and may the instructor identify herself as a physical therapist on the participant handouts and educational materials?

A: Physical therapists may only use title when they are providing services that are physical therapy practice. As you have indicated this program does not include the required physical therapy assessment, diagnosis, treatment, goal setting, and reviews typical of physical therapy care, the program may not be promoted or billed as physical therapy and the instructor may not use title and identify themselves as being a physical therapist.

Q: I recently took a position as a manager and will no longer be working in the capacity of a physical therapist, so I changed my licensing status from full to non-practicing? May I still use the title physical therapist or indicate that I am a physical therapist when I hold a non-practicing license?

A: No, you may not use the title physical therapist or indicate that you are a physical therapist when you are licensed as non-practicing.

Glossary of Terms

Clinical Specialist: The College recognizes a “clinical specialist” to be a registrant who possesses a specialist certification in a defined area of physiotherapy practice (as approved by the Canadian Alliance of Physiotherapy Regulators clinical specialty recognition review process).

Credentials: a qualification or achievement, including:

Academic Credentials - refers to words or abbreviations that indicate an educational qualification from an accredited educational institution providing certification or specific competency. (i.e., academic doctorate, degrees, diplomas, or certificates (BScPT, MPT, PhD))

Other Educational Credentials - refers to words or abbreviations that indicate an educational qualification that may or may not be from an accredited educational institution but does indicate a specific certification or specific competency (i.e., FCAMT, AFCI)

Title: refers to the words “Physiotherapist”, “Physical Therapist”, the abbreviation “P.T.”, or any word, title or designation, abbreviated or otherwise, to imply the person is a member as defined in the Physical Therapists’ Act of 1998

References

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2. Saskatchewan College of Physical Therapists. Standards of Practice. Available at: [SCPT Standards of Practice - September 1, 2022\(web\).pdf \(in1touch.org\)](https://scpt.in1touch.org/uploaded/web/website/Standards%20of%20Practice%20September%201%202022(web).pdf)
3. Ethical Code of Conduct for Physiotherapist in Canada. Available at: <https://scpt.in1touch.org/uploaded/web/Updated%20Code%20of%20Ethical%20Conduct.pdf>
4. College of Physical Therapists of Alberta, Podcase What’s in a Name? [Episode 9: “What’s in a Name?” — College of Physiotherapists of Alberta \(cpta.ab.ca\)](https://www.cpta.ab.ca/podcast/episode-9-what-s-in-a-name/)