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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2021

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A N A C T

RELATING TO BUSINESSES AND PROFESSIONS -- PHYSICAL THERAPISTS

Introduced By: Representative David A. Bennett

Date Introduced: January 27, 2021

Referred To: House Health, Education & Welfare

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Section 5-40-1 of the General Laws in Chapter 5-40 entitled "Physical  
2 Therapists" is hereby amended to read as follows:

3 **5-40-1. Definitions.**

4 As used in this chapter:

5 (1) "Board" means the board of physical therapy established by § 5-40-2.

6 (2) "Department" means the department of health.

7 (3) "Diagnostic imaging" means techniques used to capture an image of a body part. For  
8 purposes of this chapter, diagnostic imaging shall include basic radiological imaging, commonly  
9 referred to as x-ray imaging but shall not include other methodologies such as computer topography  
10 scan, ultrasound, bone scan, magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) or positron emission tomography  
11 scan.

12 ~~(3)~~(4) "Examination" means an examination approved by the department in consultation  
13 with the board.

14 ~~(4)~~(5) "License" means a license issued by the department to practice physical therapy.

15 ~~(5)~~(6) "Physical therapist" means an individual who is licensed by the department to  
16 practice physical therapy.

17 ~~(6)~~(7) "Physical therapist assistant" means an individual who is licensed by the department  
18 to assist in the practice of physical therapy under the supervision of a physical therapist.

19 ~~(7)~~(8) "Physical therapy" means the care and services provided by or under the direction

1 and supervision of a physical therapist who is licensed pursuant to this chapter.

2 ~~(8)~~(9) "Practice of physical therapy" means:

3 (i)(A) Examination, evaluation, treatment, and instruction of patients/clients to detect,  
4 assess, prevent, correct, alleviate, and limit physical disability, physical dysfunction, and pain from  
5 injury, disease, and any other bodily conditions;

6 (B) Administration, interpretation, and evaluation of tests and measurements of bodily  
7 functions and structures;

8 (C) The planning, administration, evaluation, and modification of treatment and  
9 instruction, including the use of physical measures, activities, and devices, for preventive and  
10 therapeutic purposes; ~~and~~

11 (D) The provision of consultative, educational, and other advisory services for the purpose  
12 of reducing the incidence and severity of physical disability, physical dysfunction, and pain; and

13 (E) Ordering diagnostic imaging and studies that are performed and interpreted by other  
14 licensed health care professionals pursuant to the provisions of § 5-40-23.

15 (ii) The practice of physical therapy does not include the practice of medicine as defined  
16 in chapter 37 of this title.

17 ~~(9)~~(10) "Supervision" means that a licensed physical therapist is at all times responsible  
18 for supportive personnel and students.

19 SECTION 2. Chapter 5-40 of the General Laws entitled "Physical Therapists" is hereby  
20 amended by adding thereto the following section:

21 **5-40-23. Ordering diagnostic imaging - Sunset.**

22 (a) Physical therapists licensed pursuant to § 5-40-7 may order diagnostic imaging as  
23 defined in § 5-40-1 to be performed and interpreted by other licensed health care professionals.

24 (b) All diagnostic imaging tests ordered by a physical therapist shall be reported by the  
25 physical therapist to the patient's designated primary care physician of record within seven (7) days  
26 following receipt of the results. This reporting shall not be required if the patient does not have a  
27 primary care physician.

28 (c) Unless extended by the general assembly, physical therapists shall not be authorized to  
29 order diagnostic imaging as an authorized practice of physical therapy after December 31, 2023.

1 SECTION 3. This act shall take effect upon passage.

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EXPLANATION  
BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL  
OF

A N A C T  
RELATING TO BUSINESSES AND PROFESSIONS -- PHYSICAL THERAPISTS

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1           This act would include in the practice of physical therapy the ordering of diagnostic  
2 imaging (x-ray imaging) to be performed by other health care professionals. Test results must be  
3 reported by physical therapists to the patient's physician within seven (7) days of receipt. Unless  
4 extended by the general assembly, authorization for physical therapists to order diagnostic imaging  
5 sunsets December 31, 2023.

6           This act would take effect upon passage.

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