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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2020

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A N A C T

RELATING TO BUSINESSES AND PROFESSIONS -- PHYSICAL THERAPISTS

Introduced By: Senators Lombardi, Ciccone, Conley, Lynch Prata, and McCaffrey

Date Introduced: January 21, 2020

Referred To: Senate Health & Human Services

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
10 topography scan, ultrasound, bone scan, magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) or positron emission
11 tomography 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
18 department to assist in the practice of physical therapy under the supervision of a physical
19 therapist.

1 ~~(7)~~(8) "Physical therapy" means the care and services provided by or under the direction
2 and supervision of a physical therapist who is licensed pursuant to this chapter.

3 ~~(8)~~(9) "Practice of physical therapy" means:

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

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

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

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

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

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

19 ~~(9)~~(10) "Supervision" means that a licensed physical therapist is at all times responsible
20 for supportive personnel and students.

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

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

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

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

30 (c) Unless extended by the general assembly, physical therapists shall not be authorized
31 to order diagnostic imaging as an authorized practice of physical therapy after December 31,
32 2022.

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

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EXPLANATION
BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
OF
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RELATING TO BUSINESSES AND PROFESSIONS -- PHYSICAL THERAPISTS

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
5 imaging sunsets December 31, 2022.

6 This act would take effect upon passage.

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