



Republic of the Philippines
House of Representatives
Quezon City, Metro Manila

Twentieth Congress
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. **4264**



Introduced by Representatives Ferdinand Martin G. Romualdez, Yedda Marie K. Romualdez, Andrew Julian K. Romualdez, and Jude A. Acidre

AN ACT
REGULATING THE REGISTRATION, LICENSURE, AND PRACTICE OF
PHYSICAL THERAPY, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Physical therapists play an important role in diagnosing and treating a range of injuries, disabilities, and health conditions. Part of their purpose is to improve a person's range of movement and quality of life and prevent further injury or disability.

Considering its distinct role in our society, this bill seeks to recognize physical therapy as a separate and distinct profession from occupational therapy by amending Republic Act No. 5680 or the Philippine Physical and Occupational Therapy Law.

The bill shall also create the Professional Regulatory Board of Physical Therapy, which shall be tasked to maintain high professional, ethical, and technical standards for physical therapists. The Board may conduct ocular inspection in hospitals and clinics to determine and enforce compliance with professional regulatory laws, and the rule and regulation promulgated pursuant thereto, to aid the Board in formulating or revising policies relating to the practice of physical therapy.

In general, this bill is geared towards making the law more appropriate to present physical therapy practice in the country to enable them to provide quality rehabilitation service to more Filipinos. Further, this bill aims to improve the quality of physical therapy education provided by schools.

This measure was approved by the House on Third Reading during the 19th Congress.

In view of the foregoing, approval of this bill is earnestly sought.



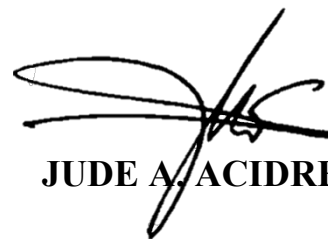
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Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the Philippines in Congress assembled:

SECTION 1. *Short Title.* – This Act shall be known as the “Philippine Physical Therapy Law”.

SEC. 2. *Statement of Policy.* – The State recognizes the importance of physical therapists in nation building. Hence, it shall develop and nurture competent, productive, and well-rounded physical therapists whose standards of practice and service shall be excellent, and globally competitive, resulting not only from their education and training but through, honest, effective, and credible licensure

examinations, regulatory measures, programs, and activities that foster their continuing professional growth.

SEC. 3. *Definition of Terms.* – As used in this Act.

(a) *Physical Therapy* refers to a health profession concerned with providing relevant services to individuals and populations to develop, maintain, and restore maximum movement and functional ability throughout the lifespan. Such services are provided in circumstances where movement and function are threatened by aging, injury, pain, diseases, disorders, conditions, or environmental factors, and with the understanding that functional movement is central to what it means to be healthy. Physical therapy is also known as physiotherapy in other parts of the world.

(b) *Physical Therapist* refers to a person who is a holder of a valid registration and professional license issued by the Professional Regulatory Board of Physical Therapy and the Professional Regulation Commission, and who is legally qualified to practice physical therapy in the Philippines pursuant to this Act.

SEC. 4. *Scope and Nature of the Practice of Physical Therapy.* – The practice of physical therapy shall include identifying and maximizing the quality of life and movement potential within the spheres of promotion, prevention, treatment, intervention, habilitation, and rehabilitation. These spheres encompass physical, psychological, emotional, and social wellbeing. Physical therapists are qualified and professionally required to:

- (a) Undertake a comprehensive examination or assessment of patient or client or needs of a client group;
- (b) Evaluate the findings from the examination or assessment to make clinical judgments regarding patients or clients;
- (c) Formulate a physical therapy diagnosis, prognosis, and plan;
- (d) Provide consultation within their expertise and determine when patients or clients need to be referred to another professional;
- (e) Implement a physical therapy intervention or treatment program;
- (f) Determine the outcomes of any interventions or treatments; and
- (g) Make recommendations for self-management.

Physical therapists are guided by the universal principles of ethics and professional practice as expressed in their own code of ethics.

The scope of physical therapy practice is not limited to direct patient or client care, but also includes: formulating and implementing responsive public health strategies; advocating for patients' or clients' health; supervising and delegating to others; leading; managing; teaching; researching and developing and implementing health policy at the local, national, and international levels.

ARTICLE II

THE PROFESSIONAL REGULATORY BOARD OF PHYSICAL THERAPY

SEC. 5. *Creation and Composition of the Members of the Board.* – There is hereby created a Professional Regulatory Board of Physical Therapy, hereafter referred to as the Board, under the administrative supervision of the Professional Regulation Commission, hereinafter referred to as the Commission, composed of a chairperson and four (4) members appointed by the President of the Philippines within six (6) months from the enactment of this Act and upon the recommendation of the Commission from among physical therapists recognized and nominated by the accredited integrated professional organization (AIPO) of physical therapists, academe and other professional organizations.

SEC. 6. *Powers and Functions of the Members of the Board.* – The Board shall have the following powers and functions:

- (a) Promulgate, administer, and enforce rules and regulations necessary for carrying out the provisions of this Act;
- (b) Supervise and regulate the registration, licensure, and practice of physical therapy in the Philippines;
- (c) Administer oaths in connection with the administration of this Act;
- (d) Adopt an official seal of the Board;
- (e) Maintain a roster of physical therapists indicating therein the basic information about the registered professionals;

- (f) Issue, reinstate, suspend or cancel the registration and license, or special permits for the practice of physical therapy in the Philippines;
- (g) Study and monitor conditions affecting the practice of physical therapy and adopt such measures as may be deemed necessary for the enhancement of the profession and maintenance of high professional and ethical standards;
- (h) Work in partnership with the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) or its equivalent, to ensure that all educational institutions offering education comply with the prescribed policies, standards, and guidelines;
- (i) Prescribe the Code of Ethics and Ethical Standards of Practice for physical therapists as endorsed by the AIPO organization of physical therapists;
- (j) Hear or investigate any violations of this Act, its implementing rules and regulations, code of ethics, and ethical standards of practice, and for this purpose;
- (k) Issue *subpoena duces tecum* or *subpoena ad testificandum*, or both, to ensure the appearance of witnesses, and the production of documents in connection therewith: *Provided*, That the decision of the Board shall become final and executory after fifteen (15) days from receipt of judgment or decision unless appealed to the Commission;
- (l) Prescribe guidelines and criteria for the Continuing Professional Development (CPD) program for physical therapists;

- (m) Prescribe the subjects in the licensure examination and table specifications, determine the syllabi of the subjects and their relative weights, score, and rate the examination papers, and submit the results to the Commission within the period provided for in their rules;
- (n) Administer the examinations to applicants for the practice of physical therapy in accordance with the provisions of this Act;
- (o) Adopt a program for the full computerization of the licensure examination;
- (p) Grant an application for registration without examination subject to the approval of the Commission;
- (q) Issue special permits to persons admitted to the practice of physical therapy for a specific duration of time, and certificates of recognition for advanced studies, researches, and accomplishments that contribute to the enrichment of the profession; and
- (r) Perform such other powers and functions as deemed necessary to carry out the objectives of this Act.

The policies, resolutions, rules and regulations, orders, or decisions issued or promulgated by the Board shall be subject to review and approval of the Commission.

SEC. 7. *Qualifications of the Members of the Board.* – The members of the Board shall, at the time of their appointment, possess the following qualifications:

- (a) Has resided in the Philippines for at least five (5) years;
- (b) Is a duly registered physical therapist under this Act, with a valid certificate of registration and professional license;
- (c) Has engaged in the practice of physical therapy for at least ten (10) years, with the last five (5) years as a continuous period immediately preceding the appointment;
- (d) Has demonstrated an exemplary degree of competence and ethics in one professional practice as a physical therapist;
- (e) Is a member of good standing of the AIPO of physical therapists, and not an officer thereof;
- (f) Has no prior conviction by a competent court of an offense involving moral turpitude; and
- (g) Has no direct or indirect pecuniary interest in any school, college, or university or institution conferring an academic degree for admission to the practice of physical therapy; or where review classes in preparation for licensure examination are offered or conducted; nor be a member of faculty or administration thereof.

SEC 8. *Term of Office.* – The Chairperson and Members of the Board shall hold office for a term of three (3) years: *Provided*, That members of the first Board to be appointed after the approval of this Act shall hold office for the following terms: the

Chairperson for three (3) years, two (2) Members for two (2) years, and the other two (2) Members for one (1) year: *Provided, further*, That a Chairperson or Member may be appointed for a second term, but may not serve for more than two consecutive three year terms, or six (6) consecutive years. Interim vacancies shall be filled in for the unexpired term only, or until their successors have been appointed and duly qualified.

A successor to a member whose term of office has expired shall be appointed for the full term of three (3) years from the date of expiration of the term of office from which the predecessor was appointed.

SEC 9. *Removal of the Members of the Board.* – Any member of the Board may, upon the recommendation of the Commission, after due process of law and investigation conducted by the Commission, be suspended or removed by the President from office for cause such as gross neglect of duty, incompetence, malpractice, unprofessionalism, immorality, unethical or dishonorable conduct, final judgment of crimes involving moral turpitude, and manipulating or rigging of the licensure examination results, disclosure of secret and confidential information in the examination questions prior to the conduct of the said examination, or tampering of grades.

SEC.10. *Compensation and Allowances of the Members of the Board.* – The chairperson and members of the Board shall receive compensation and allowances comparable to that being received by the chairpersons and members of existing regulatory boards under the Commission, as provided for in the annual General Appropriations Act.

SEC. 11. *Administrative Supervision of the Board, Custodian of Records, Secretariat, and Support Services.* – The Board shall be under the administrative supervision of the Commission. All records of the Board, including applications for examination, examination papers and results, minutes of deliberation, administrative cases, and other investigations involving physical therapists, shall be kept by the Commission. The Commission shall designate the Secretary of the Board and shall provide the secretariat and other support services to implement the provisions of this Act.

SEC. 12. *Annual Report.* – The Board shall, at the close of each calendar year, submit an annual report to the Commission, giving a detailed account of its proceedings and accomplishments during the year and recommending measures to be adopted, with the end in view of upgrading and improving conditions affecting the practice of physical therapy in the Philippines.

ARTICLE III

LICENSURE EXAMINATION AND REGISTRATION

SEC. 13. *Examination Required.* – All applicants for registration for the practice of physical therapy shall be required to undergo a licensure examination to be given by the Board in such places and dates as the Commission may designate, subject to compliance with the requirements prescribed by the same.

SEC. 14. *Qualifications for Examination.* – An applicant for the licensure examination for physical therapists shall establish, to the satisfaction of the Board, that the following qualifications are met:

- (a) A citizen of the Philippines or a foreigner whose country has a formal reciprocity agreement with the Philippines;
- (b) Is of good moral character and has not been convicted of any crime involving moral turpitude; and
- (c) A graduate of Bachelor of Science in Physical Therapy degree or its equivalent degree as determined by the Board from a school, college, or university in the Philippines or abroad whose physical therapy program is recognized by the CHED.

SEC. 15. *Scope of Examination.* – The scope of examinations shall, after the necessary stakeholder consultation, be determined by the Board, subject to the approval of the Commission. The Board shall take into consideration the minimum curriculum standards for physical therapy, the current scope of practice, and the latest developments in the profession, locally and globally, that affect the practice and delivery of physical therapy services in the country.

SEC. 16. *Ratings in the Examination.* – To be qualified as having passed the licensure examination for physical therapists, a candidate must have obtained a general average of seventy-five percent (75%), with no grade lower than sixty percent (60%) in any of the examination subjects.

SEC. 17. *Report of Ratings.* – The Board shall submit to the Commission the ratings obtained by each candidate within ten (10) calendar days after the examination, unless extended for just cause.

SEC. 18. *Issuance of the Certificate of Registration, Professional License, and Professional Identification Card.* – A certificate of registration and professional identification card shall be issued to examinees who pass the licensure examination for physical therapist subject to payment of fees prescribed by the Commission. The certificate of registration shall bear the signature of the chairperson of the Commission and the chairperson and members of the Board, stamped with the official seal of the Commission and the Board respectively, indicating that the person named therein is entitled to practice the physical therapy profession, with all the benefits and privileges appurtenant thereto. The said certificate of registration shall remain in full force and effect until withdrawn, suspended or revoked in accordance with this Act.

A professional identification card bearing the registration number, and dates of issuance and expiry date duly signed by the chairperson of the Commission, shall likewise be issued to every registrant upon payment of the prescribed fees.

SEC. 19. *Initials PTRP.* – The initials PTRP, which stands for Physical Therapist Registered Philippines, shall be used following the name of the registered physical therapist, especially when signing documents pertinent to the practice of the profession.

SEC. 20. *Refusal to Register.* – The Board shall refuse to register any successful examinee who has been convicted by a court of competent jurisdiction of any criminal offense involving moral turpitude, or has been found guilty of immoral or dishonorable conduct after investigation by the Board, or has been declared to be of unsound mind. The reason for the refusal shall be set forth in writing.

SEC. 21. *Cancellation or Suspension of the Certificate of Registration and Special Permit.* – The Board may, after giving proper notice of hearing to the party concerned, cancel the practitioner's certificate of registration and professional identification card , or be suspended from the practice of the profession; or cancel the special permit for any of the causes or grounds mentioned in Section 29 of this Act or for any unprofessional or unethical conduct, malpractice, violation of any of the provisions of this Act, its rules and regulations, the Code of Ethics, and Ethical Standards of Practice for physical therapists.

SEC. 22. *Reinstatement, Re-issuance or Replacement of Certificate of Registration and Professional Identification Card.* – Two (2) years after the date of revocation, the Board may, upon application and for reasons deemed proper and sufficient, reinstate any revoked certificate of registration or professional license. A new certificate of registration or professional identification card, or special temporary permit may be issued to replace lost, destroyed, or mutilated ones, subject to the rules as implemented by the Board.

SEC. 23. *Oath of Physical Therapists.* – Successful examinees qualified for registration, and qualified applicants for registration without examination, shall be required to take an oath of profession before any member of the Board or any government official authorized by the Commission to administer oaths, prior to entering into the practice of physical therapy in the Philippines.

SEC. 24. *Indication of Licensure and Privilege Tax Receipt.* – All physical therapists shall be required to indicate on the documents they sign, use or issue in connection with the practice of their profession, their registration, or professional

license number and date of issuance thereof, the duration of validity of said license, and the professional tax receipt number issued to them.

SEC. 25. *Roster of Physical Therapists.* – The Board shall prepare, update, and maintain a roster of physical therapists which shall contain the name of each registered physical therapist, their residence and office addresses, the date of registration and issuance of certificates, and other data which the board may deem pertinent.

SEC. 26. *Issuance of Special and Temporary Permit.* – A special temporary permit may be issued by the Board upon the recommendation of the AIPO of physical therapists, subject to the approval by the Commission and payment of the prescribed fee to the following persons:

- (a) Foreign-licensed physical therapists called for consultation or a specified purpose that is deemed essential to national development, the practice shall be limited only for the particular work being: *Provided*, That there is no Filipino physical therapist qualified for such consultation or purpose;
- (b) Foreign-licensed physical therapists whose service shall be free of charge and who are highly needed under particular settings;
- (c) Foreign-licensed physical therapists engaged as professors, lecturers, or critics in fields essential to physical therapy education in the Philippines, whose engagement is limited to teaching only; and

- (d) Foreign-licensed physical therapists recognized as experts or specialists whose service is deemed essential to the advancement of the profession in the Philippines.

The special temporary permit shall include these limitations and conditions: validity for a period of not more than one (1) year, subject to renewal; the branch or specialty of physical therapy which the permit holder can practice; and the specific place or places of practice such as clinic, hospital, therapy center, school, college, or university offering the course of physical therapy. The Board, subject to the approval by the Commission, shall prescribe rules and regulations for the implementation of this particular section.

ARTICLE IV

PRACTICE OF PHYSICAL THERAPY

SEC. 27. *Delivery of Physical Therapy Service.* – Physical therapists shall work in partnership with other health service providers or health professionals, patients or clients, families, and communities in the delivery of services in the most effective, cost efficient, and client-centered service.

SEC. 28. *Prohibition on the Practice of Physical Therapy.* – No person shall practice or offer to practice physical therapy, nor offer to be a physical therapist, or use the title, word, letter, figure, or any sign tending to convey the impression of being a physical therapist, nor advertise or indicate in any manner whatsoever to be qualified to perform the work of a physical therapist without passing the licensure examination given by the Board, except as otherwise provided in this Act.

SEC. 29. *Prohibited Acts.* – No person shall:

- (a) Engage in the practice of physical therapy by representing oneself as a physical therapist without a valid certificate of registration, professional identification card, or a valid temporary or special permit granted by the Board pursuant to this Act;
- (b) Represent oneself as a physical therapist during the time that the professional license is not valid or that the certificate of registration has been suspended or revoked, or that the special temporary permit has been cancelled;
- (c) Allow anybody to use the certificate of registration or professional license, or both and special temporary permit as a physical therapist to enable such unqualified individual to engage in the practice of physical therapy;
- (d) Use the certificate of registration, professional identification card, or special temporary permit of another person; and
- (e) Violate the provision of the Code of Ethics and Ethical Standards of Practice as recommended by the AIPO of physical therapists.

SEC. 30. *Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice for Physical Therapists.* – The Board shall adopt and promulgate the Code of Ethics and Ethical Standards of Practice for physical therapists as prescribed and issued by the AIPO of physical therapists. All licensed physical therapist shall abide by the principles and standards embodied in the Code.

SEC. 31. *Continuing Professional Development Program.* – All physical therapists shall abide with the requirements, rules and regulations on continuing professional development to be promulgated by the Board, subject to the approval of the Commission, in coordination with the AIPO of physical therapists or the recognized representative of duly accredited education institutions, or both. For this purpose, the Board shall create a CPD Council to implement a CPD program guided by qualifications framework and career progression principles, subject to the guidelines as may be prescribed by the Commission.

SEC. 32. *Integration of the Professional Organization.* – The physical therapy profession shall be integrated into one (1) national professional organization of physical therapists, which shall be duly registered with the Securities and Exchange Commission. The Board, subject to the approval by the Commission, shall accredit the said organization as the one and only accredited integrated professional organization of registered physical therapists. All physical therapists whose names appear in the current Roster of Physical Therapists shall *ipso facto* become members thereof and shall receive all the benefits and privileges appurtenant thereto upon payment of the required membership fees and dues. Membership in the accredited integrated professional organization shall not be a bar to membership in other organizations of physical therapists.

SEC. 33. *Foreign Reciprocity.* – No foreign physical therapist shall be given a certificate of registration and professional identification card or be entitled to any of the privileges under this Act unless the country or state of which the foreign physical therapist is a subject or citizen, permits Filipino physical therapists to practice within

its territorial limits on the same basis as the subjects or citizens of said country or state.

ARTICLE V

PENAL AND MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS

SEC. 34. *Penal Provisions.* – Any person who shall violate any of the provisions of this Act or any of its implementing rules and regulations as promulgated by the Board, subject to the approval of the Commission, shall upon conviction, be punished with a fine of not less than Twenty thousand pesos (Php 20,000.00) nor more than Fifty thousand pesos (Php 50,000.00), or by imprisonment of not less than two (2) years nor more than five (5) years, or both, at the discretion of the court.

SEC. 35. *Appropriations.* – The amount necessary for the implementation of this Act shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act.

SEC. 36. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* – To implement the provisions of this Act, the Board shall, subject to the approval of the Commission promulgate the rules and regulations, as well as the Code of Ethics and Ethical Standards of Practice for physical therapists, within sixty (60) days after the effectivity of this Act.

SEC. 37. *Transitory Provisions.* – The existing Board of Physical and Occupational Therapy shall continue to function in the interim until such time that the new and separate Board for Physical Therapy shall be constituted pursuant to this Act.

SEC. 38. *Separability Clause.* – If any part, portion, section, or provision of this Act shall be declared invalid or unconstitutional, such shall not invalidate any other

part, portion, section, or provision of this Act and the same shall continue to be in force and effect.

SEC. 39. *Repealing Clause.* – Republic Act No. 5680, otherwise known as the “Philippine Physical and Occupational Therapy Law” is hereby repealed. All other laws, decrees, orders, issuances or parts thereof which are inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby modified, superseded, or repealed.

SEC. 40. *Effectivity.* – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the *Official Gazette* or in a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,