

**STATE OF FLORIDA
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
BOARD OF PHYSICAL THERAPY PRACTICE**

**IN RE: THE PETITION FOR DECLARATORY
STATEMENT REQUESTED BY CECILLE RIGGS, PT**

FINAL ORDER

THIS MATTER came before the Board of Physical Therapy Practice (Board) pursuant to Section 120.565, Florida Statutes. At a duly-noticed public meeting held on August 6, 2010, in Tampa, Florida, the Board considered the above-referenced Petition for Declaratory Statement. The Petition was filed with the Department of Health on April 6, 2010. The Petitioner is requesting that the Board issue a Declaratory Statement interpreting the physical therapy practice act and rules as applied to Petitioner and other licensees. More specifically, Petitioner requests that the Board allow physical therapists to have the authority to remove staples from their patients. Petitioner was present without counsel. Having considered the Petition and relevant statutes and rules, the Board issues the following:

FACTUAL FINDINGS

1. The Petition was duly filed and noticed in the Florida Administrative Law Weekly.
2. The Petition is attached hereto and incorporated herein by reference.
3. The Petitioner is a Florida licensed physical therapist.
4. The Petitioner seeks a declaratory statement from the Board as to whether staple

removal from a patient's body is within the scope of practice for physical therapists under Chapter 486, Florida Statutes, and relevant rules.

CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

1. The Board has jurisdiction over this matter pursuant to Section 120.565 and Chapter 486, Florida Statutes.
2. The Board answers the request for Declaratory Statement in the affirmative with conditions.
3. Under the scope of practice for physical therapists stated in Section 486.021(11), Florida Statutes, physical therapists may perform assessment and treatment of any disability, injury, disease, or other health conditions on their patients. Physical therapists are also allowed to prevent said conditions with the use of rehabilitative techniques using physical, chemical, and other means of manipulation for the benefit of their patients.
4. The Board understands the language in the above stated practice act to mean that physical therapists may use non invasive techniques for the treatment and prevention of injuries. The Board deems staple removal to be a type of non invasive, rehabilitative technique allowed under the physical therapist practice act as long as it is performed under the direction and specified order of a physician licensed in the State of Florida and the physical therapist receives adequate theoretical and clinical instruction before engaging in staple removal. Adequate instruction should be based on the current state of medical literature describing the proper

removal of staples from the human body. Physical therapists providing staple removal services shall still be held to minimum standards found in Rule 64B17-6.001, Florida Administrative Code.

This Order shall become effective upon filing with the Clerk of the Department of Health.

DONE AND ORDERED, this 19 day of November, 2010.

BOARD OF PHYSICAL THERAPY PRACTICE



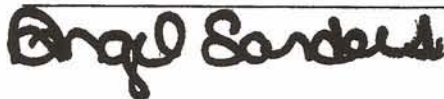
Allen Hall, Executive Director
for Dr. Madeleine Hellman, Chair

NOTICE OF RIGHT TO JUDICIAL REVIEW

A party who is adversely affected by this Final Order is entitled to judicial review pursuant to Section 120.68, Florida Statutes. Review proceedings are governed by the Florida Rules of Appellate Procedure. Such proceedings are commenced by filing one copy of a Notice of Appeal with the Agency Clerk of the Department of Business and Professional Regulation and a second copy, accompanied by filing fees prescribed by law, with the District Court of Appeal, First District, or with the District Court of Appeal in the Appellate District where the party resides. The Notice of Appeal must be filed within thirty (30) days of rendition of the order to be reviewed.

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I HEREBY CERTIFY that a true and correct copy of the foregoing was furnished by U.S. Mail to: CECILLE RIGGS, 3903 Northdale Blvd, Ste. 100E, Tampa, Florida 33624; and by interoffice mail to DROR LEWY, Assistant Attorney General, PL-01 The Capitol, Tallahassee, Florida 32399-1050, this 22 day of November, 2010.



Deputy Agency Clerk

7009 3410 0001 4581 0797

PS Form 3800	Street, Apt. No. or PO Box No. City, State, Zip	Sent To	Total Posts	Return to Endorser (Endorser)	Return to Recipient (Endorser)	For delivery	U.S. POSTAL SERVICE
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CLERK *Angel Sanders*
DATE *4-6-10*

Petition for Declaratory Statement before the Board of Physical Therapy Practice

Petitioner: Cecille Riggs, RPT

3903 Northdale Boulevard Ste 100E

Tampa, Fl 33624

Tel #: (941) 773-6159

Fax #: (913) 814-4974

I am requesting clarification from the Board of Physical Therapy on whether staple removal is within the scope of practice for physical therapists in the state of Florida and the requirements to do so.

Clarification on the ability and requirements to remove staples will assist our practitioners in providing consistent quality care and comprehensive services to their patients. If the board recommends that staple removal is within the scope of practice of physical therapists in Florida, I propose that agencies electing to train their physical therapists on staples removal must be able to provide a written protocol. The protocol needs to demonstrate a safe and efficient manner in providing this non-invasive procedure. The protocol should also include procedures for contacting appropriate medical personnel as needed.

I am submitting to the board a sample proprietary protocol that is presently being used for this purpose in one of our agencies in another state. In addition to the protocol, I would also like to submit the consideration of the Physical Therapy Board of California on this matter in their meeting last August 1995. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Cecille Riggs, RPT

March 31, 2010

PT WOUND CARE COMPETENCY: STAPLE REMOVAL DEMONSTRATION & VALIDATION JOB AID

1 of 2

This job aid provides criteria for the competent performance of the wound care procedure for *surgical staple removal*. A physical therapist may perform this procedure in compliance with the State Practice Act, in their state.

The physical therapist's competency must be validated by a qualified instructor (clinical manager or designee) prior to performing the procedure without supervision. Before validating competency in the patient care setting, a qualified instructor should demonstrate the skill in a skills lab practice session. After practicing, the clinical instructor will precept the physical therapist's performance and document competency. If needed, the clinical instructor will provide additional teaching and/or practice.

NOTE: A physician's order is required. The order specifies physical therapy care for the wound care procedure.

Retain the completed competency checklist in the clinical associate's employment file.

Therapist Name: _____

Employee Number# _____

CRITERIA	COMPETENCY DEMONSTRATED		COMMENTS
	(LAB) Instructor Date & Initials	(PATIENT) Preceptor Date & Initials	
1. Verify physician's order for STAPLE removal (LAB: remove staples on Post Op Day 10, leave open to air, pt may shower.)			
2. Explain procedure to patient			
3. Wash hands			
4. Prepare a clean surface and have ALL necessary supplies available. Open using "no touch" technique to keep supplies sterile. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alcohol hand gel • Staple removal kit • Saline, wound cleanser or povidone iodine swabs (two packages.) • Sterile gauze, tape • Steri-strips: (4 pkgs: ¼" for knees; ½ " for hips) • Skin Prep™ (bonding agent for steri-strips) • Clean gloves • Waterproof trash bag 			
5. Apply clean gloves			
6. Remove old dressings & inspect for drainage. Discard in trash bag			
7. Remove gloves and discard			
8. Wash hands			
9. OPTIONAL STEP: Apply clean gloves and cleanse incision line with NS/wound cleanser and gauze or povidone swabs as ordered to moisten and remove crusted areas/drainage			

PT WOUND CARE COMPETENCY: STAPLE REMOVAL DEMONSTRATION & VALIDATION JOB AID

2 of 2

CRITERIA	COMPETENCY DEMONSTRATED		COMMENTS
	(LAB) <i>Instructor</i> <i>Date & Initials</i>	(PATIENT) <i>Preceptor</i> <i>Date & Initials</i>	
10. Apply clean gloves and remove staples: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Beginning at the proximal end of the incision, position extractor's lower jaws beneath span of first staple • Squeeze handles until they are completely closed • Lift staple away from the skin. • Remove every other staple. If incision line is well-approximated, remove remaining staples* • Discard staples in the trash bag with used dressings <p><i>* If incision line is not well approximated, consult with physician before removing staples because this would likely result in an open wound requiring new orders for care.</i></p>			
11. OPTIONAL: Paint incision line with povidone iodine swab or apply NS/wound cleanser as ordered. Leave open to air or dress with dry gauze or steri-strips as ordered			
12. Remove gloves and discard			
13. Wash hands			
14. Tie off trash bag and dispose in accordance with local biohazardous waste disposal regulations			
15. Document care performed including wound appearance, number of staples present and number of staples removed, and type of dressing applied.			

Initials	Print Name	Signature/Title	Date
			___/___/___
			___/___/___
			___/___/___
			___/___/___

Physical Therapy Board of California

2005 Evergreen St, Suite 1350, Sacramento, California 95815

Phone: (916) 561-6200 FAX: (916) 263-2560 Internet: www.ptb.ca.gov/



STAPLE & SUTURE REMOVAL

Is staple removal within the scope of practice of a physical therapist?

The subject of staple removal was considered by the Practice Issues Committee of the Physical Therapy Board of California (Board) at their meeting of August 1995. The Practice Issues Committee opined that physical therapists may not perform invasive procedures; specifically in this instance, that of stapling a wound closed.

The removal of staples, on the other hand, is a non-invasive procedure, which would ordinarily come under the heading of nursing services, and is not normally associated with the practice of physical therapy; however, physical therapists may provide any non-invasive physical rehabilitation procedure they have been adequately trained to perform. Should a facility elect to train physical therapists to do staple removal, the facility would need a written protocol to be included in their policies and procedures manual, and to be used in the training of each physical therapist who will perform this procedure.

The training protocol must be sufficient to ensure the facility's patients that the procedure is being done in a safe and efficient manner by personnel who are trained specifically to remove staples. The training should also include procedures for problem situations resulting from staple removal, and for notification of proper medical personnel.

The Board has received multiple inquires as to whether suture removal would be considered a non-invasive procedure such as staple removal. After consulting with a physical therapist expert consultant, it has been determined that the removal of sutures would fall under the same category as the removal of staples as indicated above.

Note: This document is not a declaratory opinion of the Physical Therapy Board of California.