

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 5132



INTRODUCED BY REP. MAXIMO, JR. Y. DALOG

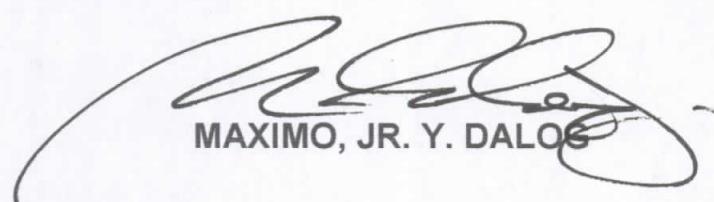
EXPLANATORY NOTE

This bill seeks to amend Republic Act 5680, entitled, "An Act Creating the Board for Physical Therapists and Occupational Therapists."

For almost fifty years, Physical therapists and Occupational therapists have been regulated and monitored under a common board, the Board of Examiners for Physical Therapists and Occupational Therapists created through Republic Act 5680"

On March 11, 2019, Republic Act 11241 also known as "The Philippine Occupational Therapy Law of 2018" was signed into law. This law recognized the fact that Occupational Therapy and Physical Therapy are two different professions with their own professional associations namely, Philippine Physical Therapy Association (PPTA) and Occupational Therapy Association of the Philippines, Inc. (OTAP), duly accredited by the Professional Regulation Commission and duly registered with the Securities and Exchange Commission,¹ thus the passage of the law mainly for occupational therapists. However, there was no separate bill filed to update and regulate the registration, licensure and practice of physical therapy, thus the need for the passage of this bill.

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



MAXIMO, JR. Y. DALOG

¹ An Act Regulating the Registration, Licensure, and Practice of Occupational Therapy, Providing Funds Therefor and for other Related Purposes, Senate Bill 454 (SB 454), Explanatory Note, 17th Congress, Congressional Records (2016).

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HOUSE BILL NO. _____

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"AN ACT REGULATING THE REGISTRATION, LICENSURE AND PRACTICE OF PHYSICAL THERAPY IN THE PHILIPPINES, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

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 "The Philippine Physical Therapy Act of 2019".

SEC. 2. Statement of Policy. – The State recognizes the importance of physical therapy and physical therapists in nation building. Hence, (1) it shall develop and nurture competent, virtuous, productive and well-rounded physical therapists whose standards of practice and service shall be excellent, world-class, and globally competitive through inviolable, honest, effective, and credible licensure examinations, and through regulatory measures, programs, and activities that foster their continuing professional growth; and (2) it shall establish quality standards for physical therapists in linking Primary Health Care to community-based rehabilitation.

SEC. 3. Objectives. – The Act provides for and shall govern:

- a. The administration and conduct of licensure examination, registration and licensing of physical therapists;
- b. The supervision and regulation of the practice of physical therapy in the Philippines; and

c. The updating of the definition of the roles of physical therapists.

SEC.4. Definition of Terms. – For purposes of this Act, the following terms shall mean:

- a. **Accreditation** — is a type of quality assurance process that utilizes all aspects of review and assessment according to pre-defined standards. Accreditation may be applied to physical therapy education programmes or a programme of physical therapy service delivery.
- b. **Advanced scope of practice** — physical therapists may develop a scope of practice beyond the usual and customary physical therapist's practice as a result of attaining significant additional education, professional experience, and/or enhanced competencies. Specialisation is an example of advanced scope of practice.
- c. **Accredited and Integrated Professional Organization (AIPO)** – refers to an integrated national organization, association, or society that is granted accreditation by the Board and the Commission as the Accredited Integrated Professional Organization of physical therapists; and
- d. **Physical therapy** is 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 ageing, 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 involves the interaction between the physical therapist, patients/clients, other health professionals, families, care givers and communities in a process where movement potential is examined/assessed and goals are agreed upon, using knowledge and skills unique to physical therapists.

- e. **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.
- f. **Health promotion** — is the combination of educational and environmental support for actions and conditions of living, conducive to health in order to enable people to gain greater control over the determinants of their own health. It represents a comprehensive social and political process and not only embraces actions directed at strengthening the skills and capabilities of individuals, but also action directed towards changing social, environmental and economic conditions so as to alleviate their impact on public and individual health.

- g. **Specialization** — specialisation is the result of advanced knowledge, skills and competence attained by a physical therapist qualified in a specific area, within the scope of practice recognised as physical therapy. This usually results from defined training and educational pathways, associated with a formal process for testing and recognising the advanced level acquired.
- h. **Specialist physical therapist** — is a physical therapist who has formally demonstrated advanced clinical competence in a defined specialty area within the scope of practice recognised as physical therapy. A specialist physical therapist would be expected to practice and/or teach in the specialty area of clinical practice and also to be involved in evaluation and practice/service development and to contribute to the body of knowledge relevant to their practice setting.
- i. **Primary health care** — is the first level of contact of individuals, the family and community with a nation's health system bringing health services as close as possible to where people live and work, and constitutes the first element of a continuing health service process. It is an essential health service based on practical, scientifically sound and socially acceptable methods and technology made universally accessible to individuals and families in the community

SEC. 5. Scope and Nature of the Practice of the Physical Therapy. – shall embrace, but is not limited with identifying and maximizing quality of life and movement potential within the spheres of promotion, prevention, treatment/intervention, habilitation, and rehabilitation which encompass physical, psychological, emotional and social wellbeing. It embraces the application of the physical therapist's extensive knowledge of the body and its movement needs and potential, central to determining strategies for diagnosis and intervention. In addition, it is not limited to **direct patient/client care**, but also includes: public health strategies; advocating for patients/clients and for health; supervising and delegating to others, leading, managing, teaching, research, developing and implementing health policy at the local, national and international levels.

Physical therapists are qualified and professionally required to:

- a. Undertake a comprehensive examination/assessment of patient/client or needs of a client group;
- b. Evaluate the findings from the examination/assessment to make clinical judgments regarding patients/clients;
- c. Formulate a physical therapy diagnosis, prognosis, and plan;
- d. Provide consultation within their expertise and determine when patients/clients need to be referred to another professional;

- e. Implement a physical therapy intervention/treatment program;
- f. Determine the outcomes of any interventions/treatments; and
- g. Make recommendations for self-management.

ARTICLE II
CREATION OF THE PROFESSIONAL REGULATORY BOARD OF
PHYSICAL THERAPY

SEC. 6. Creation and Composition of the Professional Regulatory Board of Physical Therapy. – There is hereby created a Professional Regulatory Board of Physical Therapy, hereinafter referred to as the Board, under the administrative supervision of the Professional Regulation Commission, hereinafter referred to as the Commission, composed of a Chairman and three (3) Members, appointed by the President of the Philippines from a list of six (6) recommendees of the Professional Regulation Commission for each position chosen from a list of four nominees for each position submitted by the Accredited Integrated Professional Organization of physical therapists.

SEC. 7. Powers and Functions of the Board. – The Board shall have the following powers and functions:

- a. Promulgate, administer and enforce rules and regulations to carry out the provisions of this Act;
- b. Supervise and regulate the licensure, registration and practice of the physical therapy profession;
- 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, cancel or revoke 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. Ensure, in collaboration with the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) or its equivalent, that all educational institutions offering physical therapy education comply with the prescribed policies, standards and guidelines;

- i. Prescribe the Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice for physical therapists as endorsed by the AIPO of physical therapists;
- j. Hear or investigate any violations of this Act, its implementing rules and regulations and the Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice for physical therapists, and for this purpose, issue *subpoena duces tecum* and/or *ad testificandum* to secure the appearance of the witnesses and the production of documents in connection therewith. *Provided*, That the decision of the Board shall, unless appealed to the Commission become final and executory after fifteen (15) days from receipt of judgment or decision;
- k. Prescribe the guidelines and criteria in the Continuing Professional Development (CPD) program for physical therapists in compliance with Republic Act 10912 otherwise known as CPD Act of 2016;
- l. Prescribe the subjects in the licensure examination and table of 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 the rules of the Commission;
- m. Administer the examinations to applicants for the practice of physical therapy in accordance with the provisions of this Act;
- n. Adopt a program for the full computerization of the licensure examination;
- o. Grant registration without examination subject to approval by the Commission;
- p. Issue special permits to persons admitted to the practice 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;
- q. Perform such other powers and functions as deemed necessary to carry out the objectives of this Act; and
- r. Except in matters which are ministerial in nature, all policies and functions of the Board embodied in resolutions as well as rules and regulations issued by the Board shall be subject to the review and approval of the Commission.

SEC. 8. Qualifications of Board Members. – The Chairman and Members of the Board, at the time of their appointment, must possess the following qualifications:

- a. A resident of the Philippines for at least five (5) years;

- b. A duly registered physical therapist under this Act with a valid certificate of registration and professional license;
- c. Has engaged in rendering physical therapy services for at least five (5) continuous years immediately preceding his/her appointment;
- d. A member of good standing of the accredited and integrated professional organization of physical therapists, and not an officer thereof;
- e. Must be of proven integrity and of high moral and ethical values in his/her personal as well as professional conduct;
- f. Has no prior conviction by a competent court in a final judgment of an offense involving moral turpitude; and
- g. Has no pecuniary interest, directly or indirectly, in any school, college or university or educational institution conferring an academic degree necessary for the 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 members of the Board shall hold office for a term of three (3) years or until their successors have been appointed and duly qualified; *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, one (1) member for two (2) years, and the other member for one (1) year: *Provided further*, That a chairperson or member may be reappointed for a second term, but may not serve more than two (2) consecutive three (3)-year terms or six (6) consecutive years. Interim vacancies shall be filled for the unexpired term only.

SEC.9. Removal and Suspension of Board Members. – The President may suspend or remove any member of the Board from Office upon the recommendation of the Commission after due process of law and investigation conducted by the Commission for cause such as gross neglect of duty, incompetence, malpractice, unprofessionalism, immorality, unethical or dishonourable 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 Allowance of the Chairman and Members of the Board. – The Chairman and Members of the Board shall receive compensation and allowances comparable to the compensation and allowances received by chairpersons and members of existing regulatory boards under the Commission as provided for in the General Appropriations Act.

SEC. 11. 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 the 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 Commission.

SEC. 15. 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 reciprocity agreement with the Philippines;
- b. Of good moral character and has not been convicted of an offense involving moral turpitude; and
- c. A graduate of a 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 is recognized by the CHED.

SEC. 16. Scope of Examination. – The examination for Physical Therapy professionals shall basically cover the following fields:

- a. Physical Therapy Application 1
- b. Physical Therapy Application 2
 - PT in Special Population
 - PT in Pediatrics

- PT in Geriatrics
 - PT in CBR and Public Health linking to Primary Health Care
- c. Physical Therapy Application 3
- Professional Ethics
 - Organization, Management
 - Research
- d. Physical Therapy Application 4

The Board, subject to the approval by the Commission, may revise or exclude any of the subjects or add new ones as the need arises, and may adjust or modify the percentage weight of the subjects in order to keep the examination abreast and in conformity with the latest developments in the profession here and abroad.

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 given subject.

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.—Registration and a professional license shall be issued to examinees who pass the licensure examination for physical therapists subject to payment of fees prescribed by the Commission. The registration and professional license shall bear the signature of the chairperson of the Commission and the members of the Board, stamped with the official seal, indicating that the person named therein is entitled to practice the profession with all the privileges appurtenant thereto, the registration and license shall remain in full force and effect until revoked or suspended in accordance with this Act.

SEC.19. Initial. – The initials PTRP, which stands for Physical Therapists 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 dishonourable 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. Reinstatement, Re-issuance or Replacement of Certificate of Registration and Professional License. – 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, and in so doing, may, in its discretion, exempt the applicant from taking another examination.

A new certificate of registration, professional license, or special permit, to replace lost, destroyed, or mutilated ones, may be issued subject to the rules as implemented by the Board.

SEC.22. 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 23. Indication of Licensure and Privilege Tax Receipt. – The physical therapist shall be required to indicate his/her registration/professional license number and date of issuance thereof, the duration of validity of said license, including his/her privilege tax receipt number, on the documents he/she signs, uses or issues in connection with the practice of his/her profession.

SEC. 24. Revocation or Suspension of the Certificate of Registration, and Cancellation of Special Permit. – The Board may, after giving proper notice of hearing to the party concerned, revoke the practitioner's certificate of registration and professional license, or suspend him/her from the practice of the profession; or cancel the special permit for any of the causes or grounds mentioned in Section 26 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 Standards of Practice of physical therapists.

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, his/her residence and office addresses, the date of registration and issuance of certificates, and other data which the Board may deem pertinent. The roster shall be open to the public, copies of which shall be mailed to each person listed therein.

SEC. 26. Issuance of Special and Temporary Permit. – Special or temporary permits may be issued by the Board, subject to the approval by the Commission upon recommendation of the integrated professional organization of physical therapists and payment of the fees and charges prescribed by the Commission, to the following persons:

- a. Foreign-licensed physical therapists called for consultation or a specified purpose that is deemed essential to national development: *Provided*, That the practice shall be limited only for the particular work being engaged: *Provided further*, That there is no Filipino therapist qualified for such consultation or purpose;

- b. Foreign-licensed physical therapist whose service shall be free 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 therapist recognized as an expert or specialist whose service is deemed essential to the advancement of the profession in the Philippines.

The permit shall, among other things, include these limitations and conditions: valid only 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, center, school/college/university offering the course of physical therapy. The Board, subject to the approval by the Commission, shall prescribe rule and regulations for the implementation of this particular section.

ARTICLE IV PRACTICE OF THE PHYSICAL THERAPY

SEC. 27. Prohibition Against the Unauthorized Practice of Physical Therapy. – No person shall practice physical therapy in the Philippines or offer himself/herself as a physical therapist, or use the title, word, letter, figure or any sign tending to convey the impression that one is a physical therapist, or advertise or indicate in any manner whatsoever that one is qualified to practice or perform the work of a physical therapist, unless he/she has satisfactorily passed the licensure examination for physical therapists given by the Board, except as otherwise provided in this Act,

SEC. 28. Prohibited Acts. – No person shall:

- a. Engage in the practice of physical therapy by representing himself/herself as a physical therapist without a valid registration, professional license, or a valid temporary/special permit granted by the Board pursuant to this Act;
- b. Represent to be a physical therapist during the time that his/her professional license is not valid or that his/her certificate of registration has been suspended or revoked, or that his/her temporary/special permit has been cancelled;
- c. Allow anybody to use his/her certificate of registration and/or professional license and/or temporary/special permit as a physical therapist to enable such unqualified individual to engage in the practice of physical therapy;

- d. Use as his/her own the certificate of registration, professional license, or temporary/special permit of another person; and
- e. Violate any provision of the Code of Ethics as recommended by the accredited national organization of physical therapists.

SEC. 29. Code of Ethics and Professional Standards. – The Board shall adopt and promulgate the Code of Ethics and the Code of Professional Standards of Practice for physical therapists prescribed and issued by the Accredited Integrated Professional Organization (AIPO) of physical therapists.

SEC. 30. Continuing Professional Development (CPD) Program.—All physical therapists shall abide with the requirements, rules and regulations on continuing professional development to be promulgated by the Professional Regulatory Board of Physical Therapy, subject to the approval of the Commission, in coordination with the AIPO of physical therapists and/or the recognized representative of duly accredited education institutions. For this purpose, the Board may create a CPD council to implement the CPD program, subject to such guidelines as may be prescribed by the Commission.

SEC. 31. Integration of Physical Therapists. – 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 (SEC). The Board, subject to approval by the Commission, shall accredit the said organization as the one and only AIPO of registered physical therapists. All physical therapists whose names appear in the Registry Book of Physical Therapists shall *ipso facto* or automatically become members thereof and shall receive all the benefits and privileges appurtenant thereto upon payment of the required AIPO membership fees and dues.

Membership in the AIPO shall not be a prevention to membership in other organizations of the physical therapists.

SEC. 32. Foreign Reciprocity. – No foreign physical therapist shall be given a certificate of registration/professional license and professional identification card or be entitled to any of the privileges under this Act unless the country 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 FINAL PROVISIONS

SEC. 33. Penal Provisions. – Any person who shall violate any of the Provisions of this Act, including its Implementing Rules and Regulations as promulgated by the board, subject to the approval of the Commission, shall, upon conviction, be imposed the penalty of a fine of not less than Fifty

Thousand Pesos (Php 50,000.00) or more than Five Hundred Thousand Pesos (Php 500,000.00), or imprisonment of not less than two (2) years or more than five (5) years, or both upon the discretion of the court.

SEC. 34. Appropriation. – The Chairman of the Professional Regulations Commission shall immediately include in the Commission's budget program, the implementation of this Act, the funding of which shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act.

SEC. 35. Implementing Rules and Regulations. – The Board, subject to the approval of the Commission, shall adopt, promulgate and issue the Implementing Rules and Regulations, as well as Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice for physical therapists, in coordination with the AIPO, within sixty (60) days after the effectivity of this Act.

SEC. 36. Transitory Provisions. – The existing Professional Board of Physical Therapy and Occupational Therapy shall continue to function in the interim without another appointment until such time that the new and separate Professional Regulatory Board of Physical Therapy shall have been constituted pursuant to this Act.

SEC. 37. Separability Clause. – Any provision of this Act or part hereof that may be declared unconstitutional shall not affect the effectivity of the other provisions.

SEC. 38. Repealing Clause. – All laws, executive orders, presidential decrees, rules and regulations and other issuances contrary to or inconsistent with this Act shall be deemed repealed or modified accordingly.

SEC. 39. Effectivity. – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the Official Gazette or in at least two (2) national newspapers of general circulation.

Approved,