

animalpt

SPECIAL INTEREST GROUP

INTRODUCTION – LIN MCGONAGLE

Amie has asked each of the officers to introduce ourselves so that you can get better acquainted with your officers. As many of you know, I was a founding member and the first President of the Animal PT SIG. On a state level, I currently represent the SIG as the New York Liaison.

My formal training includes a B.S. in Animal Science from Cornell University, a Master's degree in Physical Therapy from Arcadia University (then Beaver College), and an Associates degree in Veterinary Technology.

My career as a Physical Therapist currently spans 21 years in human medicine focused in acute care, rehabilitation, pediatrics, and home care. I operated a private practice for the past 13 years that included animal rehabilitation. In the fall of 2005, I became the Chief of Rehabilitation Services at Colonial Veterinary Hospital in Ithaca with full-time responsibilities in patient care and administration. We collaborate with Cornell University's Hospital for Animals as well as local veterinarians within the Finger Lakes region. At this time we offer Rehabilitation, Fitness and Conditioning, and Weight Management programs. Our facility includes an open exercise area, Ferno Underwater Treadmill, and a dedicated physical therapy exam and treatment room. We have a team of 10 veterinarians, including 2 Orthopaedic surgeons. My clinical research interest is Canine Functional Outcome Assessment. Amie, Carrie, and I are collaborating to test this tool with cases involving cruciate surgery. We hope to have preliminary results to share in the next 2 years.

Many of you may not realize it but we are coming up on our "unofficial" 10th anniversary! It was at the June 1996 APTA Annual Conference that the idea for the Animal PT SIG gained momentum. There were several trips to Fairfax soon after for meetings at APTA Headquarters. They were followed by travels to Combined Sections in San Diego and Annual Conference in Orlando to make presentations to the Section Board, gain support, and member signatures. Within a relatively short time bylaws were written, officers recruited, and education courses offered. The SIG became an official part of the Orthopaedic Section in 1998, just 2 years from the time David Levine and I started talking about the possibilities in Minneapolis.

Since that time the SIG and its members have been embracing a new paradigm for our profession. I am particularly excited about our Strategic Plan. It is a significant step forward for such a 'young' group. The Plan will guide us into the next 5 years with a clear vision for documenting our scope of practice, developing an Animal Rehabilitation Journal, and creating a professional network within the animal rehabilitation community. This amazing journey could not have happened without the support of many people: all of our past SIG officers, Section Officers and Board members, and APTA Officers and Board

members who helped us behind the scenes. I would especially like to acknowledge the contributions of Jan Richardson, Bill Boissonault, Marilyn Moffat, Lola Rosenbaum, Andrew Gucione, Steve Levine, Jodi Gandy, Joe Godges, Rebecca Craik, Carol Oatis, as well as Tara and Terri and the entire Orthopaedic Section staff.

I am grateful to be a part of this dynamic group. We all share a passion for physical therapy as a profession and for animals! In closing, I encourage all of you to take an active role in the SIG. We need your input, leadership, and commitment to make the goals of our Strategic Plan a reality. I look forward to our next 10 years together!

APTSIG NATIONAL LIAISON COORDINATOR REPORT

The Animal Physical Therapy Special Interest Group (APT-SIG) is continuing correspondence with liaisons in the following 18 states: Alaska, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Florida, Illinois, Kansas, Louisiana, Maryland, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, Nevada, New Hampshire, New York, North Carolina, Virginia, and Wyoming. In its recent history, the APTSIG had upwards of forty state liaisons, however, given that many of these volunteers are no longer APTA members, they can no longer serve in this capacity. As a result, the APTSIG is actively recruiting liaisons in thirty-two states and Washington, DC. Please contact Charlie Evans, our National Liaison Coordinator, if you are interested in serving as a state liaison.

As an APTA APTSIG state liaison, you are part of an important information network for APTSIG members. We ask that each state liaison be familiar with the physical therapy and veterinary state practice acts, rules, and regulations. It is also important that each liaison understand his or her state's licensure boards' interpretation of these practice acts. The APTSIG will be contacting these liaisons for assistance and expertise in carrying out our strategic plan as well as for reports from each state on an annual basis.

Our National Liaison Coordinator has compiled a summary of all of the physical therapy practice acts and many of the veterinary practice acts. These are available on the Orthopaedic Section website at: <http://www.orthopt.org/animal%20rehab%20resources.php>. As you review your state's practice act, specific attention should be paid to the language used, especially the words person, human being, individual, public, client, and/or patient. Depending on the specific rules and regulations of your state, if a physical therapist or assistant practices physical therapy on animals, calls the practice physical therapy, or displays his or her credentials, the physical therapist's or assistant's license could be in jeopardy. As well, the therapist or assistant might possibly be prosecuted for practicing veterinary medicine without a license.

Keep in mind, also, the statement released by the APTA Board of Directors last spring: “Acknowledging the collaborative relationships between physical therapists and veterinarians, and the evolving specialized practice by some physical therapists in animal rehabilitation, APTA has adopted a Board position that states “the practice of animal rehabilitation by physical therapists is permissible where allowed by law and regulation.” The Board cited the House Mission Statement Fulfillment Policy (HOD 06-93-06-07) in its deliberations, noting that the Association is to enable physical therapists to improve their knowledge and skills in the interest of furthering the profession. The Board concluded that its simultaneous responsibility is to further the profession and to promote legal practice. “

In attempts to communicate with our membership, we will include reports from our state liaisons in this and future issues of the APT-SIG newsletter. The first report is from Nevada, which has recently adopted unique regulations concerning the practice of animal rehabilitation by physical therapists.

NEVADA

Physical Therapy Practice Act

(<http://www.leg.state.nv.us/NRS/NRS-640.html>)

“CHAPTER 640 – PHYSICAL THERAPIST

GENERAL PROVISIONS

NRS 640.022 ‘Physical therapy’ defined. ‘Physical therapy’ means the specialty in the field of health which is concerned with prevention of disability and physical rehabilitation of persons having congenital or acquired disabilities.

NRS 640.024 ‘Practice of physical therapy’ defined. ‘Practice of physical therapy’:

1. Includes:

- (a) The performing and interpreting of tests and measurements as an aid to evaluation or treatment;
- (b) The planning or initial and subsequent programs of treatment on the basis or the results of tests; and
- (c) The administering of treatment through the use of therapeutic exercise and massage, the mobilization of joints by the use of therapeutic exercise without chiropractic adjustment, mechanical devices, and therapeutic agents which employ the properties of air, water, electricity, sound and radiant energy.”

Veterinary Medical Practice Act

(<http://www.leg.state.nv.us/nac/nac-638.html>)

“CHAPTER 638 – VETERINARIANS

GENERAL PROVISIONS

NAC 638.001 Definitions. (NRS 638.070) As used in this chapter, unless the context otherwise requires, the words and terms defined in NAC 638.003 to 638.0185, inclusive, have the meanings ascribed to them in those sections.

NAC 638.006 ‘Direct supervision’ defined. (NRS 638.070) ‘Direct supervision’ means that a veterinarian is on the premises of an animal hospital or in the same area on a range and is quickly and easily available, and the animal has been examined by the veterinarian within the previous 12 hours or at such time as good veterinary medical practice requires consistent with the

particular delegated task of animal health care.

NAC 638.0175 ‘Veterinarian-client-patient relationship’ interpreted. (NRS 638.070) For the purposes of this chapter, a veterinarian shall be deemed to have a ‘veterinarian-client-patient relationship’ concerning a nonhuman animal if the veterinarian satisfies all of the following conditions:

1. The veterinarian assumes the responsibility for making medical judgments concerning the health of the animal and the need for medical treatment of the animal.
2. The veterinarian has knowledge of the present care and health of the animal sufficient to provide at least a general or preliminary diagnosis of the medical condition of the animal. This knowledge must be acquired by:
 - (a) Conducting a physical examination of the animal; or
 - (b) Visiting the premises where the animal is kept in a timely manner that is appropriate to the medical condition of the animal.
3. The veterinarian obtains the informed consent of the client for medical treatment of the animal.
4. The veterinarian obtains the agreement of the client to follow the instructions provided by the veterinarian for the care and medical treatment of the animal.

ANIMAL PHYSICAL THERAPY

NAC 638.750 ‘Animal physical therapy’ defined. (NRS638.070) As used in NAC 638.750 to 638.790, inclusive, ‘animal physical therapy’ means the rehabilitation of injuries in a nonhuman animal through the use of the following techniques, but does not include animal chiropractic:

1. Stretching;
2. Massage therapy;
3. Rehabilitative exercise;
4. Hydrotherapy;
5. Application of heat and cold; and
6. Stimulation by use of:
 - (a) Low-level lasers;
 - (b) Electrical sources;
 - (c) Magnetic fields; or
 - (d) Noninvasive ultrasound.

NAC 638.760 Requirements to practice; application for certificate of registration; fee. (NRS 638.070)

1. A person shall not practice animal physical therapy in this State unless he is:
 - (a) A veterinarian;
 - (b) A licensed veterinary technician who has received training in animal physical therapy and is working under the direct supervision of a veterinarian licensed in this State; or
 - (c) A physical therapist who has obtained a certificate of registration pursuant to this section and complies with the provisions of NAC 638.780.
2. A physical therapist who desires to secure a certificate of registration to practice animal physical therapy in this State must make written application to the Board.
3. The application must be on a form provided by the Board, include any information required by the Board and be accom-

panied by satisfactory proof that the applicant:

- (a) Is of good moral character;
- (b) Has been an active licensed physical therapist in this State for at least 3 years;
- (c) Is in good standing with the State Board of Physical Therapy Examiners;
- (d) Has successfully completed at least 100 hours of instruction or course work, or a combination of both, in the area of animal physical therapy, which must include, without limitation, assessment and planning of treatment, behavior, biomechanics, common orthopedic and neurological conditions, comparative anatomy, neurology, and therapeutic modalities and exercises; and
- (e) Has completed at least 125 hours of supervised clinical experience in animal physical therapy with a licensed veterinarian.

4. The application must be signed by the applicant, notarized and accompanied by a fee of \$50.

5. Except as otherwise provided in NAC 638.790, upon receipt of the application and information required by subsection 3 and payment of the fee, the Board will issue to the physical therapist a certificate of registration.

NAC 638.780 Standards of practice for physical therapist holding certificate; maintenance of records. (NRS 638.070)

1. Each certificate of registration issued pursuant to sect 3 of this regulation or renewed pursuant to this section expires on January 1 of each year.

2. Each application for renewal of a certificate of registration must be:

- (a) Submitted in the form established by the Board
- (b) Signed by the physical therapist and accompanied by a renewal fee of \$25;
- (c) Accompanied by proof that the physical therapist completed, during the 12-month period immediately preceding the beginning of the new registration year, at least 5 hours of continuing education in animal physical therapy approved by the Board; and
- (d) Accompanied by proof that his license as a physical therapist in this state is active and that he is in good standing with the State Board of Physical Therapy Examiners.

3. A physical therapist who fails to renew his certificate of registration before it expires forfeits his certificate of registration.

1. A physical therapist who has been issued a certificate of registration pursuant to NAC 638.670 may practice animal physical therapy only:

- (a) Under the direction of a veterinarian licensed in this State who has established a valid veterinarian-client-patient relationship concerning the animal receiving the animal physical therapy before the animal physical therapy is performed; and
- (b) If the physical therapist assumes individual liability for the quality of the animal physical therapy performed.

2. The veterinarian under whose direction the physical therapist

performs the animal physical therapy:

- (a) Is not required to supervise the physical therapist during the animal physical therapy.
- (b) Is not liable for the acts or omissions of the physical therapist who performs the animal physical therapy.

3. Each physical therapist who has been issued a certificate of registration shall:

- (a) Maintain in this State for at least 4 years a separate written medical record of each animal receiving animal physical therapy from the physical therapist.
- (b) Within 48 hours after the initial visit with the animal, mail or transmit by facsimile machine a progress report to the veterinarian under whose direction the physical therapist performs the animal physical therapy.
- (c) Within 48 hours after each subsequent visit with the animal, mail or transmit by facsimile machine a progress report to the veterinarian under whose direction the physical therapist performs the animal physical therapy.

4. The veterinarian shall include the copy of the medical record received pursuant to subsection 3 in the medical record required pursuant to NAC 638.0475. The written medical record must include, without limitation:

- (a) The name, address and telephone number of the owner or the animal;
- (b) The name or identifying number, or both, of the animal;
- (c) The age, sex and breed of the animal;
- (d) The dates of care, custody or treatment of the animal;
- (e) The results of a basic rehabilitation examination related to physical therapy;
- (f) The diagnosis and treatment plan related to physical therapy recommended by the physical therapist for the animal; and
- (g) The progress and disposition of the case.

NAC 638.790 Disciplinary action. NRS 638.070

1. A violation of a provision of chapter 638 or 640 of NRS or a regulation adopted by the State Board of Physical Therapy Examiners or the Nevada State Board of Veterinary Medical Examiners is a ground for disciplinary action.

2. If the Nevada State Board of Veterinary Medical Examiners determines that an applicant for a certification of registration pursuant to NAC 638.760 or a physical therapist who has been issued a certificate of registration pursuant to NAC 638.760 has committed any act which is a ground for disciplinary action, the Board may:

- (a) Refuse to issue a certificate of registration;
- (b) Refuse to renew a certificate of registration;
- (c) Revoke a certificate of registration;
- (d) Suspend a certificate of registration for a definite period or until further order of the Board;
- (e) Impose a fine in an amount not to exceed \$10,000 for each act that constitutes a ground for disciplinary action;
- (f) Place a physical therapist who has been issued a certificate of registration on probation subject to any rea-

sonable conditions imposed by the Board, including, without limitation, requiring courses in continuing education or a periodic or continuous review of his animal physical therapy practice;

- (g) Administer a public reprimand;
- (h) Require the physical therapist who has been issued a certificate of registration to take a competency examination or a mental or physical examination; and
- (i) Require the physical therapist who has been issued a certificate of registration to pay all costs, including, without limitation, attorney's fees, incurred by the Board in taking disciplinary action against him."

NEVADA APTSIG LIAISON REPORT

"Our two boards (physical therapy and veterinary) worked collaboratively, with the veterinary board being in the leadership position. The terms 'animal physical therapy' and 'physical therapy' are exclusive one of the other. They are different and the designation of "animal physical therapy" or "APT" is used when a physical therapist meets the criteria as set in the veterinary rules and regulations. The term 'physical therapy' remains PROTECTED and is utilized for treatment of humans (person) in accordance with our practice act.

Issues that remain unaddressed are the role of the physical therapist assistant and how this role may impact the licensed veterinary technician with additional education in animal physical therapy. There was a physical therapist assistant from Las Vegas who reportedly petitioned the veterinary board to gain equal status as an animal physical therapist. The board denied her request.

Another issue that remains is that of the setting in which animal physical therapy services are provided. For example, the current regulations allow an animal physical therapist to have a private practice while a licensed veterinary technician with additional training in physical therapy could not have a private practice, as there is a requirement of supervision by a veterinarian, unless the veterinarian opened a dedicated therapy practice with veterinary technicians employed by that veterinarian. I believe that there are currently several models of this structure elsewhere in the USA.

Out here in the Old West, in a very general sense, the veterinarians recognize animal physical therapy and animal physical therapists as having a professional body of knowledge and, in general, they do not equate a veterinary technician as having the same body of knowledge, yet clearly recognize that the licensed veterinary technician is a critical person on the rehabilitation team (as a rehabilitation nurse). This is NOT regulated at this time. However, there is a need to clarify in the near future how the physical therapist assistant fits into this picture, particularly how the physical therapist assistant and the licensed veterinary technician relate to one another, if at all. There are those veterinarians who do NOT want licensed veterinary technicians to be 'lost' to rehabilitation as they are in short supply and to have them absorbed into rehabilitation would be quite a 'loss' to the veterinary practice pool. Their skills are needed in surgery, anesthesia, dentistry, radiology, etc. So far, very few veterinary technicians (in Nevada) have expressed an interest in becoming

so specialized that their training as a 'nurse' would go "down the tubes."

Requiring a veterinarian to have additional training in animal physical therapy, at least in Nevada, is not in the cards at this time. On the other hand, this is a very small community and the veterinarians simply have not shown an interest in this area. This doesn't mean that a veterinarian couldn't set up a specialized practice. We (Nevada) just haven't gone in this direction yet. If this did occur, and per the regulations, it could, they could do so without any additional training.

In summary, all that we have done in Nevada is establish quality criteria for a physical therapist practicing animal physical therapy. We at least have a collaborative working model between the boards and have established clearly who practices 'physical therapy' and 'animal physical therapy' and further what qualifications must be met to be an animal physical therapist. The physical therapy board doesn't have a problem using the term "animal physical therapy," only "physical therapy" if it pertains to non-human patients and, as stated above, these are entirely separate credentials and practices.

I can share with you that so far what we have in Nevada is working very well. We have, as a foundation, an environment of mutual respect, professionalism, trust, and collegiality; recognizing that issues and problems will come up. Perhaps what we did here in Nevada was a little bit easier given our state's size. We recognize that we have a long way to go to ensure that the people and animals of Nevada receive quality and optimal animal physical therapy services by credentialed individuals."

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The Fourth International Symposium on Rehabilitation and Physical Therapy in Veterinary Medicine will be at Arnhem, The Netherlands October 26-29, 2006. For further information, see the official Symposium website at www.rehabsymposium.com.