

Career Profile PHYSIOTHERAPIST

What is a Physiotherapist? – Career Description/Scope

A Physiotherapist is regulated health professional who has a significant role in health promotion and treatment of injury and disease. Only Registered Physiotherapists can provide physiotherapy.

Physiotherapists may assess physical abilities through evaluative procedures such as functional ability tests; establish treatment goals based on physical diagnosis; plan and implement programs of physiotherapy including therapeutic exercise, manipulations and massage; communicate with referring physicians and other health care professionals; and evaluate the effectiveness of treatment plans and modify accordingly.

Physiotherapists have a presence in all health care delivery streams in Ontario: hospitals, long-term care facilities, home care, community-based clinics, schools, private practice clinics and primary care networks. As well, Physiotherapists may be actively involved in clinical supervision, teaching and research, and providing consulting or education services.

Education Requirements to Work in Ontario

Admission Requirements:

- 3-4 year undergraduate degree with some science and social science pre-requisites depending on the program

Program Specifics:

- 2 years continuous education program
- Curriculum includes classes and placements
- Graduate with a Master's degree
- In Ontario, 5 universities offer a Physiotherapy program:
 - McMaster University
 - Queen's University
 - University of Ottawa
 - University of Toronto
 - Western University

Physiotherapist Practice Requirements

To practice in Ontario, Physiotherapists must be registered with the College of Physiotherapists of Ontario (CPO) and meet the following criteria:

- Entry to Practice
 - National certification exam: Physiotherapy Competency Examination which includes both a written and a practical component done in two phases
- Ongoing
 - Participate in the CPO quality assurance program – onsite audits every 3-5 years
 - Continuing education hours and annual self assessment of competency including a professional portfolio

How does a Physiotherapist Practice at TBRHSC?

- Physiotherapists are governed by relevant government legislation and regulations and the policies of the Physiotherapist's employer including:
 - College of Physiotherapists of Ontario
 - Regulated Health Professions Act
 - Physiotherapy Act
 - Public Hospitals Act
- Physiotherapists require a Physician's order to treat patient's, as per Public Hospitals Act
- Physiotherapists who perform controlled acts such as tracheal suctioning, spinal manipulation, wound care and oxygen titration, must roster for these, as per CPO Standards
- Physiotherapists work in both inpatient and outpatient programs
- Physiotherapists may supervise Rehabilitation Assistants and assign different tasks to them to carry out aspects of treatment with patients

What does a Physiotherapist Do?

- Physiotherapists combine their in-depth knowledge of the body and how it works with specialized hands-on clinical skills to assess, diagnose and treat symptoms of pain, illness, injury or disability
- Physiotherapists work in partnership with individuals of all ages to break down the barriers to physical function
- Some physiotherapists are advanced practice physiotherapists with extra training in order to do more specialized assessment and some ordering of X-rays, etc.
- Physiotherapy has proven to be effective in the treatment and management of arthritis, diabetes, stroke and traumatic brain injury, spinal cord injury and a range of respiratory conditions offering those afflicted with tools and techniques to acquire and maintain an optimum level of function and pain free living
- Physiotherapists work as part of the interprofessional team

Web Resources

- College of Physiotherapists of Ontario www.collegept.org
- Canadian Physiotherapy Association www.physiotherapy.ca
- The Ontario Physiotherapy Association www.opa.on.ca
- Canadian Alliance of Physiotherapy Regulators www.alliancept.org
- Canadian Council of Physiotherapy University Programs www.physiotherapyeducation.ca/CanadianPrograms.html
- McMaster University Program Information Page www.srs-mcmaster.ca/MScPTHomenbsp/tabid/3557/Default.aspx
- Queen's University Program Information Page www.rehab.queensu.ca/prospective.php?id_mnu=3
- University of Ottawa Program Information Page: <http://www.health.uottawa.ca/sr/physio/index.htm>