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# Alabama Board of Physical Therapy Newsletter

## From the Desk of the Executive Director



Happy New Year!

While 2023 was a productive year, we have no plans to slow down in our pursuit to make 2024 an even better year. One of our major projects for 2024 is to improve the Board website. We have already started working with the Alabama Office of Information Technology to develop this new, improved website. Once complete, end-users will find the website more user friendly; there will be a clearer path for users to gain access to areas of need or interest and to find answers to questions. Additionally, the newer software will provide enhanced security.

Thank you to Nathan McGriff for your Service!

In reflection and gratitude, the Board would like to express appreciation for the service Nathan McGriff selflessly gave to the ABPT over the past 10 years while representing the Northern District PTA Board Member. He served in many roles while on the ABPT, including Secretary and Wellness Program Liaison.

Welcome to the Board, Zach Nelson, PTA!

On December 15, 2023, Governor Kay Ivey appointed Zach Nelson as the Northern District PTA Board Member. Zach has been a Physical Therapist Assistant for 15 years. Additionally, in 2021, he earned an MBA with a concentration in Healthcare Management from the University of North Alabama. Zach currently serves as Director of Operations for Amedisys Hospice. The ABPT looks forward to tapping into Zach's wealth of knowledge and experience to protect the consumers of Alabama.

-Kathy Miller, Executive Director



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## PT COMPACT UPDATE

*The Physical Therapy Compact is an agreement between member states to improve access to physical therapy services for the public by increasing the mobility of eligible physical therapy providers to work in multiple states.*

*FSBPT launched the PT Compact to increase consumer access to physical therapy services by reducing regulatory barriers to interstate mobility and cross-state practice.*

*Taken from: [fsbpt.org](https://fsbpt.org)*

### Update

The Alabama Board of Physical Therapy (ABPT) continues to make progress toward issuing compact privileges in Alabama and will be working through the Spring on a number of final implementation steps. Necessary modifications to the ABPT Administrative Code have been made to reflect the new compact privilege-holder designation, and the ABPT is currently working with the State's Legislative Services Agency (LSA) to finalize and officially publish those changes to our administrative rules.

The ABPT is also concluding the process of contracting with Fieldprint, a nationally recognized company that will serve as an intermediary between the ABPT and the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) to collect and manage digital fingerprint and identity verification for physical therapists seeking compact privileges.

Finally, ABPT is working with the FSBPT to make an online jurisprudence learning module available that will allow those seeking compact privileges in Alabama to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of the rules and regulations governing the practice of physical therapy in the State. The ABPT anticipates being able to issue compact privileges by mid-summer 2024, as scheduled.



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## Wellness Program (Impaired Practitioner)



The Alabama Board of Physical Therapy remains committed to serving and protecting the public and physical therapy licensees in the State of Alabama by continuing our support and commitment to the Impaired Practitioner Wellness Program. Implemented to aid licensees who are impaired due to illness, inebriation, excessive use of drugs, alcohol, narcotics, chemicals, or other substances, or as a result of a physical or mental condition, the Wellness Program continues to be administered with great success by Dr. Mike Garver, DMD. The program is currently working with 12 participants, and 11 of those entered the program by self-report. The Wellness Program offers a confidential and supportive pathway for licensees seeking assistance. By self-reporting, a licensee can contact Dr. Garver or the Board office directly for the necessary help without jeopardizing their professional license. Additionally, opting for self-reporting means you can bypass the formalities of a Board hearing with the violations committee and avoid any subsequent reporting requirements to the National Practitioner Data Bank. Most importantly, this process is entirely private; your identity is protected and known to the Board solely through a case number, ensuring there is no public record of the proceedings. This initiative underscores our commitment to providing a supportive environment for our licensees, prioritizing professional integrity, confidentiality, and protection of the public.

For physical therapists and physical therapist assistants seeking support, we encourage you to contact the Wellness Program Director via the Wellness Center Hotline at 1-855-865-6704. The challenges of addiction and dependency are significant, a fact that has become even more apparent during the post-pandemic period. It is important to remember that as healthcare professionals, we are not exempt from these struggles. As physical therapy licensees in Alabama, we all have a duty and responsibility to report practitioners who may be impaired. In our roles as members of the Alabama Physical Therapy Board appointed by the Governor, our primary mission is to safeguard the public. Assisting impaired practitioners is a crucial component of this mission and serves the interest of the licensee and the public, and every member of the Board takes this responsibility very seriously. We have all known or heard of a practitioner who has lost their license due to addiction or dependency. The embarrassment, shame and frustration often accompanying that outcome can be avoided through self-reporting to the Wellness Program Director.

The overarching goal of the Wellness Program is to allow licensees to continue to participate in the practice of physical therapy and allow the public access to those services. In that context, the Board affirms its commitment to serving and protecting the public while maintaining a regulatory role that is not imposed by punitive action but by restorative and corrective action whenever possible. If you know a licensee who needs help, or you think you need to help yourself; we strongly encourage you to take advantage of the Wellness Program by contacting Dr. Garver or calling the Board office today. Mentors play a vital role in the program's success and provide participants with someone to turn to who has experienced similar challenges with addiction and dependency. Mentors remain anonymous, and the duration of participation is determined by each individual. If you are interested in serving as a mentor, please contact Dr. Mike Garver using the contact information below.

Dr. Michael Garver, DMD  
P.O. Box 426 19260  
North Mobile Street  
Citronelle, AL 36522  
E-mail: [abptwellness@gmail.com](mailto:abptwellness@gmail.com)  
Phone: (256)866-5585 Fax: (251) 866-5570



### Disciplinary Notices

Case #2023-09: Kimberly Deann Perkins, PTA  
Failure to Comply with a Condition of her License.  
License Surrendered  
Closed and Approved: July 13, 2023

Case #2023-010: Jeffrey Scott Jensen, PTA  
Unbecoming Conduct  
Closed and Approved: July 13, 2023

Case #2023-013: Angela Burgett, PTA  
Filing False Reports or Falsifying Records  
Closed and Approved: November 9, 2023

Case #2023-014: Mark Staples, PT  
Practicing with an Expired License  
Closed and Approved: November 9, 2023

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## School Visits and Happenings



3rd Year UAB DPT  
Students—Left and Below



Southern Union PTA Students—Left  
Wallace Hanceville PTA Students—Below



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2nd Year DPT Students - Samford University - Above



LBW Community College PTA Students in the Halloween spirit! - Above

APTA Annual Conference—Right



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## **The Violations Committee**

The purpose of the Alabama Board of Physical Therapy is “to ensure that the public is protected from incompetent practice of physical therapy which is achieved through the establishment of minimum qualifications for entry into the profession, through the adoption of rules defining and delineating unlawful conduct, and through swift and effective discipline for those practitioners who violate the applicable laws or rules”.

### **Administrative Code 700-X-1**

I have had the opportunity to serve the Board as a member of the Violations Committee for the past five years. The most common complaints that the Violations Committee receives are related to Professional Conduct. These may include allegations of engaging in sexual misconduct, willfully harassing, abusing or intimidating a patient, co-worker, or individual either physically or verbally while practicing physical therapy, failure to maintain appropriate records which accurately reflect the evaluation and treatment for each patient, among other violations.

More specific examples of common complaints from patients or employers include falsification of records or documentation. To avoid problems, therapists should complete all records and documentation, including daily visit logs, communication logs, and treatment documentation. It is recommended that all documentation be completed within 24 hours of the patient interaction, which will also help avoid falsifying documentation. Waiting too long to complete documentation increases the likelihood of recalling interactions inaccurately. Caseloads can be difficult to manage based on volume of visits in a single day, whether in home health, outpatient settings, or skilled nursing facilities. These occurrences can lead to documentation errors, discrepancies, and poor judgement.

I encourage therapists in all clinical setting to follow their employers' policies and procedures. Should you find yourself in an unreasonable situation, for example, unable to physically make all of the scheduled visits for the day, contact your supervisor and discuss the problem. Choosing to commit fraud may jeopardize your job and result in a complaint to the Board. The Violations Committee reviews all complaints and those that are substantiated result in disciplinary action by the Board. Disciplinary action may include, but is not limited to, restrictions, revocation or suspension of a license, and/or collection of a fine. In addition, all substantiated violations will be reported to the National Practitioner Data Bank and the licensee's name and violation will be posted in the Alabama Board of Physical Therapy Newsletter.

Submitted by Margaret Hemm, Ed.D.  
Consumer Member

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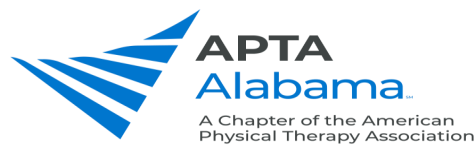
**We encourage you to check out:**



[www.pt.alabama.gov](http://www.pt.alabama.gov)



[www.ptcompact.org](http://www.ptcompact.org)



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