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Alabama Board of Physical Therapy Newsletter

From the Desk of the Executive Director

PT Compact: Making It Easier to Practice Across State Lines

We are excited to report that the Physical Therapy Compact is continuing to grow and flourish in Alabama. The PT Compact is a fantastic tool for professionals like you who want more flexibility in where and how you practice.

Alabama began issuing Compact Privileges in October 2024, and since then, more and more physical therapists and physical therapist assistants have taken advantage of this streamlined way to get practicing privileges in other states. As of now, 32 states and the District of Columbia are actively participating - meaning you can quickly and easily apply for privileges to practice in those states without going through the traditional, time-consuming licensure process.

This is especially helpful for those of you living near state borders or working in telehealth. With neighboring states like Mississippi, Tennessee, and Georgia participating, the Compact opens real opportunities to serve more patients without jumping through extra hoops.

We are seeing great success with it here in Alabama. More practitioners are using the Compact to expand their reach, fill staffing gaps, and provide care where it is needed most. It is a win for providers - and a win for patients!

If you have not researched the PT Compact yet, now is a great time. You can find everything you need at www.ptcompact.org. It is fast, straightforward, and designed to help you get to work -without getting buried in paperwork!

If you have any questions about the PT Compact, or anything else, my staff and I are always here to help. I hope you have a great summer and stay cool out there!

-Kathy Miller
Executive Director



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It's That Time of Year Again: RENEWAL SEASON!

All PT and PTA licenses **must be renewed annually** between **July 1 and September 30**. We **STRONGLY** encourage you to renew early to avoid any technical difficulties.

Alabama Jurisprudence Reminder

2025 is a Jurisprudence Year, which means:

- 2 of your 10 CE hours (or 12 if you're a PT with Direct Access) must be in **Alabama** Jurisprudence Continuing Education. **TAKING THE AL JAM DOES NOT SATISFY THIS REQUIREMENT!**
 - General ethics/jurisprudence is not acceptable; the course must pertain to Alabama's Practice Act and Administrative Code.
 - This is required in years ending in "5" or "0", per Alabama law.
-

Key Reminders

- We do not pre-approve CE courses. Use your professional judgment to select CE relevant to your PT practice.
 - You must upload all CE certificates (10 hours/12 if Direct Access) with your renewal application.
 - Please use a laptop or desktop to complete your renewal. Our current system is not mobile-friendly.
 - **We do not accept:**
 - ⇒ Courses under 1 hour
 - ⇒ In-services, orientations, staff meetings, informal rounds
 - ⇒ CPR, BLS, blood-borne pathogens, or similar workplace trainings
-

Each CE Certificate Must Include:

- Your full name
- The provider's name
- Course objectives
- Number of hours earned

For complete CE guidelines, please visit: [General Guidelines for CE & Direct Access](#)

-Angela Warr, Executive Assistant III

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**Alabama Board of Physical Therapy Spotlight
on
Chair T-Michael P. Dougherty, PTA, MPA**

**From Personal Tragedy to Professional Calling: A Physical Therapy
Career Journey of Purpose and Impact for the Future of the Profession**

When a life-changing event unfolds at a formative age, it can shape not just one's perspective, but an entire future. For T-Michael Dougherty, that pivotal moment came at age 16, when his beloved grandfather suffered a massive stroke. "I was very close to him," he reflects. "Watching him struggle—and then witnessing his remarkable progress through inpatient rehab—was heartbreaking but also inspiring." Transferred to what is now Encompass Health Rehabilitation Hospital in Montgomery, his grandfather spent over ten weeks in intensive rehabilitation. When he arrived, he was wheelchair-bound, but when he left, he walked out with only a single-point cane. The transformation T-Michael observed was not only physically changing but deeply emotionally liberating. "It was a turning point for me. I saw the power of skilled physical therapy—how it can change a patient's life and also uplift their entire family. That's when I knew I wanted to be a part of that impact."

A Mentor Who Modeled Excellence

Over the years, T-Michael has worked with many outstanding therapists across the Montgomery area, but one name stands out: Quinn Millington, PT, DPT, OCS, ECS. "Quinn hired me as a technician back in 1994 and later brought me on again as a PTA at PT Solutions after I graduated. Working with Quinn closely for more than a decade shaped not just my clinical skills, but my values as a physical therapy provider and leader." Through Quinn's mentorship, he learned the art of manual therapy, the science of clinic efficiency, and the heart of patient-centered care. Quinn was also instrumental in opening doors, offering T-Michael his first leadership role and later supporting his transition into academia. "To this day, I find myself using his phrases or applying his strategies," he says. "Quinn didn't just teach me how to be a better clinician; he modeled how to lead with integrity and purpose."

Advancing Education Through Innovation

Today, T-Michael continues his commitment to growth through pursuing an Ed.D. in Educational Leadership, with a research focus on instructional technology. His primary interest: how microlearning—short, focused bursts of content—can be used to improve learning in higher education. "I believe microlearning holds incredible potential, especially in healthcare education. It aligns with how our brains retain information and allows for more flexible, engaging delivery," he explains. His goal is to apply these principles to continuing education for healthcare professionals, improving learning outcomes and making lifelong learning more engaging, effective and accessible.

Passion for the Profession

When T-Michael is asked what he loves most about physical therapy, the answer comes quickly: "The blend of science, service, and human connection." At its core, he believes the profession is about helping people reclaim their independence, their function, and sometimes even their sense of self. "It's deeply personal work. And that never stops being humbling." As a clinician, educator, and mentor, he values the profession's adaptability. "We're constantly evolving—integrating new evidence, new technologies, and new ways of connecting with learners. That keeps it fresh and meaningful."

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Spotlight Cont'd.

Advocacy and Leadership in Alabama

His influence reaches far beyond the clinic and classroom, particularly in three critical areas: Compact Licensure, Direct Access, and preserving the independence of the PT Board. As Chair of the Alabama Board of Physical Therapy, he has been instrumental in driving and implementing legislative and regulatory advancements that directly impact patient access and professional autonomy. The adoption of the PT Compact has enabled physical therapists and physical therapist assistants to practice across state lines with greater ease—a transformative shift that has significantly improved access to care in rural and underserved communities. The passage of Direct Access legislation in 2024 marked another major milestone, and with work yet to be done removing outdated barriers and empowering patients to receive timely, evidence-based care without unnecessary delays.

Perhaps most importantly, his leadership helped prevent the consolidation of the PT Board, a move that safeguarded the profession's unique identity and ensured continued self-governance by physical therapy professionals. "Each of these changes has helped us deliver better care, faster—and do so with the autonomy and professionalism our field deserves." Serving as both a board member and now Chair has been one of the most rewarding roles of my career. I'm deeply honored to advocate for and collaborate with the exceptional providers across Alabama who make this profession so impactful.

Looking Ahead

For someone who entered the field with the hope of helping just one person—like his grandfather—he has done far more. He has shaped lives, mentored professionals, influenced policy, and is working to transform education. "My journey began with personal loss," he says, "but it became a life of purpose. That's the power of physical therapy."

-Dana Daniel Blake, PT, DPT, OCS, MTC
Alabama Board of Physical Therapy Member/Treasurer



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Ever Wondered what it would be like to be a PT Board Member?

I have been a Board member since December 2023, and it has been very rewarding. One may ask, why serve on a Board? For me, when I submitted my name to be considered by the Governor for appointment to the PT Board, it was simple - a desire to do more professionally and give back where I felt I could best serve a professional field that I love. A field that has enabled me to help others and helped me provide for my family for many years.

I will never forget the excitement I felt the day that Kathy Miller, the Board's Executive Director, called to inform me that the Governor's office had selected me to be on the Board. I did not know what to expect but ever since the first meeting I attended, I have been welcomed with open arms by those already serving on the Board and all the staff that work at the Board's office. I have since gotten to be part of welcoming our newest Board Member, Dhrumil Patel, PT. I look forward to welcoming whoever the newest appointee will be later this year as the Board is accepting nominations for a physical therapist residing within Congressional Districts 1, 3, 4 or 7.

Could that next person be you?

If you have ever felt the urge to give back, to serve, to help ensure your fellow therapists as well as the public's best interests are taken care of within physical therapy, then I highly recommend you consider submitting the required items to be considered for the Board. It will be well worth the limited time you have to invest. The Board meets every other month in Montgomery. Everyone's opinions and ideas are respected by all. I am proud to be a part of such a great team.

-Zach Nelson
Northern Area PTA Representative



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Burnout in Physical Therapy: A Signal Worth Listening To

Burnout in physical therapy isn't just a buzzword; it's a reality more clinicians are beginning to experience. Often experienced as emotional fatigue, detachment from the profession, or a reduced sense of effectiveness, burnout is gaining ground across practice settings. A 2023 national study supported by APTA found that nearly half of surveyed physical therapists reported feeling burned out (Pugliese et al., 2023). Here in Alabama, a statewide study revealed similar trends: over half of PTs and PTAs reported at least moderate levels of burnout, especially among those in the early stages of their careers or providing 36 or more hours of direct patient care per week (Bowens et al., 2021). For many, the challenge extends beyond workload—it reflects a growing misalignment between career expectations and the day-to-day realities of practice. Acknowledging that gap is an important first step toward finding effective solutions.

Fortunately, burnout is not inevitable, and recent research has identified modifiable factors that can reduce its impact. Bowens et al. (2021) found that clinicians who reported stronger work-life balance and supportive environments experienced lower levels of burnout. Other research has suggested that higher self-efficacy, defined as confidence in one's ability to manage professional demands, was associated with lower burnout levels among physical therapists, particularly in the dimension related to disengagement and neglect (Pugliese et al., 2023). Additional studies have shown that physical therapists who participate in mentorship, whether as mentors or mentees, report lower burnout, likely due to increased connection and shared perspective (Pontiff et al., 2024; Pugliese et al., 2023). Interestingly, the number of professional credentials attained, such as advanced certifications or professional association memberships, was not associated with reduced burnout, highlighting the importance of organizational culture and day-to-day support over resume-building alone (Pugliese et al., 2023).

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Burnout Cont'd

Burnout is not a personal shortcoming; it's a professional signal that demands thoughtful attention and coordinated action. Employers can help by fostering autonomy in scheduling, promoting work-life integration, and checking in regularly on staff well-being. Educators can equip students with mindset tools, coping strategies, and realistic expectations for clinical practice beyond graduation. Researchers can continue to explore context-specific drivers of burnout across roles and settings, and continuing education providers can develop courses and programming that support clinician resilience, purpose, and cognitive flexibility, not just technical competence. Whether you are early in your career or a seasoned provider, your well-being matters—not only to your own longevity in the field but to the health of the profession. The Alabama Board of Physical Therapy remains committed to supporting a sustainable, resilient workforce for the long term and advancing the conversation around this important topic.

-T-Michael Dougherty, PTA, MPA, Ed.D. (candidate)
Chair – Alabama Board of Physical Therapy

References

- Bowens, A. N., Amamoo, M. A., Blake, D. D., & Clark, B. C. (2021). Assessment of professional quality of life in the Alabama physical therapy workforce. *Physical Therapy & Rehabilitation Journal*, 101(7), pzab089. <https://doi.org/10.1093/ptj/pzab089>
- Elinich, J., Wynarczyk, K. D., & McCormick, E. (2023). Perceptions and experiences of burnout: A survey of physical therapists across practice settings. *Physiotherapy Theory and Practice*, 40(11), 2579-2590. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09593985.2023.2268160>
- Pontiff, R. J., Gleeson, P., Mitchell, K., & Patel, R. M. (2024). Prevalence of Stress and Burnout in Physical Therapist Clinical Instructors. *Journal of Physical Therapy Education*. <https://doi.org/10.1097/JTE.0000000000000386>
- Pugliese, M., Brismée, J.-M., Allen, B., Riley, S., Tammany, J., & Mintken, P. (2023). Mentorship and self-efficacy are associated with lower burnout in physical therapists in the United States: A cross-sectional survey study. *Journal of Educational Evaluation for Health Professions*, 20, Article 27. <https://doi.org/10.3352/jeehp.2023.20.27>



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School Visits and Trainings



Faulkner University



University of South Alabama Virtual Training



University of Alabama at Birmingham



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School Visits and Trainings Continued



Jefferson State Community College



South University Montgomery



Lurleen B. Wallace Community College

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Left - New Licensee Kelly! Don't forget you are welcome to come by and pick up your certificate "hot off the press"!

Below - Kristi Mullins, Kathy Miller and T-Michael Dougherty representing the Board at the AARB Legislative Reception



Below - Your Board Members after the May 2025 Meeting! Left to right, Margaret Hemm, T-Michael Dougherty, Zach Nelson, Robin Irwin, Bob Fleming, Dana Daniel Blake, and Dhrumil Patel.



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Disciplinary Actions:

Case # 2024-007
David M. Sellers, PT
Voluntary Surrender of License
Closed and Approved: 7/11/2024

Case #2025-001
Timothy J. Akins
Suspension of License/Conduct Unbecoming
Closed and Approved: 3/13/2025

Case # 2025-002
Lisa D. Goldman, PT
Voluntary Surrender of License
Closed and Approved: 3/13/2025

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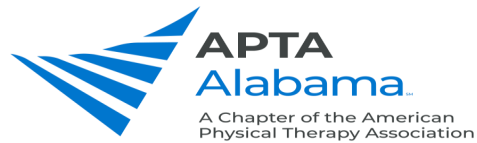


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We encourage you to check out:



www.pt.alabama.gov



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