

# Standards of Practice

# Consent

## Standard

The physiotherapist obtains **clients'** ongoing **informed consent** for the delivery of **physiotherapy services**.

## Expected outcome

Clients can expect that they will be informed of the options, risks, and benefits of proposed services, asked to provide their consent, and that the physiotherapist will respect their right to question, refuse options, and/or withdraw from services at any time.

## Performance expectations

The physiotherapist:

- Communicates with clients to explain and facilitate their understanding of physiotherapy service options.
- Explains to clients the risks and benefits of physiotherapy service options and the consequences of participating or not in proposed **interventions**.
- Obtains and documents clients' ongoing informed consent to proposed services.
- Respects the autonomy of clients to question, decline options, refuse, and/or withdraw from services at any time.
- Obtains informed consent from the appropriate individual, according to applicable legislation and regulatory requirements, in cases when clients are incompetent, incapacitated, and/or unable to provide consent.
- In situations of physiotherapy research, obtains approval from the appropriate research ethics authority and informed consent from clients prior to their participation in studies.

**Clients** are recipients of physiotherapy services, and may be individuals, families, groups, organizations, communities, or populations. An individual client may also be referred to as a patient. In some circumstances, clients/patients may be represented by their substitute decision-makers.

**Informed consent** refers to "receiving client or their legally authorized representative's permission to proceed with an agreed course of physiotherapy service. Consent may be revoked at any time...Consent can be written or oral, and may be expressed or implied. Having a written consent form does not mean there is informed consent. Informed consent involves ongoing communication between the parties involved."

**Interventions** refer to physiotherapy services that "include but are not limited to education and consultation, therapeutic exercise, soft tissue and manual therapy techniques including manipulation, electro-physical agents and mechanical modalities, functional activity training, cardio-respiratory and neuromotor techniques, and prescribing aids and devices."

**Physiotherapy services** are "services provided by or under the direction of a physiotherapist. This includes client assessment and intervention, and related communication with and reporting to various parties for the purposes of delivering patient care."

## Related Standards

- Client Assessment, Diagnosis, Interventions
- Client-Centered Care
- Communication
- Documentation and Record Keeping
- Supervision