



Alaska Board of Physical Therapy and Occupational Therapy Board Meeting August 7, 2025 Minutes

Alaska Division of Corporations, Business and Professional Licensing
8/7/2025 8:00 AM AKDT
Videoconference

1. Call to Order/Roll Call

The Alaska Board of Physical Therapy and Occupational Therapy board meeting was called to order on Thursday, August 7, 2025 by Chair Valerie Phelps at 7:59 am.

A. Roll Call

Roll call taken.

Board members present: Valerie Phelps, Chair; Tori Daugherty, Secretary; Rebecca Dean, Jonathan Gates, and Michelle Scott-Weber.

Board member absent: Eliza Ellsworth - excused.

Staff present: Shane Bannarbie, Program Coordinator; and Sheri Ryan, License Examiner. Reid Bowman, Program Coordinator 2 connected at 8:42 am.

Guests: Alec Kay, President APTA-Alaska; Molly Self, President-Elect APTA-Alaska; David Parish, Lobbyist for APTA-AK and AKOTA; Kristen Neville, State Affairs Manager AOTA.

Quorum in effect; 5 of 7 board members present. One board position vacant. Seat available since 03/2025 is open for an occupational therapist or an occupational therapy assistant.

B. Ethics Reporting – No conflicts of interest reported by Valerie Phelps, Tori Daugherty, Rebecca Dean, Jonathan Gates or Michelle Scott-Weber.

C. Review/Approve Agenda

Rebecca Dean moved to approve the agenda for the August 7, 2025 board meeting as submitted. Tori Daugherty seconded. All in favor; none opposed. Motion passed unanimously.

2. Public Comment – Alec Kay, President with APTA-Alaska provided written testimony in advance that he summarized during public comment. Concern expressed about past legislative endeavors to include “physio” and “physiotherapist” in statute and need to approach other professions, specifically chiropractors, beforehand to help smooth the process – 08.84.190 (9). Concern expressed that the list outlining categories of services in the definition of the “practice of physical therapy” – 08.84.190 (11)(b) of the draft language - may unintentionally limit scope if new techniques or terminology are not included and may ultimately restrict benefits available to Alaskans receiving care. Strong support expressed for inclusion of “serving as primary care providers” in 08.84.190 (11)(d). He urged the PT Scope Modernization work group and board to consider language to include prescriptive authority for musculoskeletal conditions. The association was looking forward to working collaboratively with the board on scope modernization. Copy of written testimony included. Board member Tori Daugherty asked Alec Kay for an update on the association’s current attempts to legislative initiatives related to diagnostic imaging. Alec Kay responded that APTA-AK is pursuing regulatory changes to the administrative code and not statutory changes. It is the state association’s opinion that it is already within statute for physical therapists to order diagnostic imaging and the obstacle is that physical therapists need to be listed as health care providers in administrative code in order to overcome.

Molly Self, President-Elect with APTA-Alaska gave public comment. She encouraged the Scope Modernization work group and the board to consider including language to allow for prescriptive authority for physical therapists. She works in the military setting and is trained in injections and has limited prescriptive authority related to neuromusculoskeletal conditions.

Valerie Phelps left the meeting at 8:25 am (technical issues). Quorum maintained; 4 of 7 board members in attendance.

Brief at ease. Chair Valerie Phelps reconnected at 8:29 am. Roll Call taken:

Board members present: Valerie Phelps, Chair; Tori Daugherty, Secretary; Rebecca Dean, Jonathan Gates, and Michelle Scott-Weber.

Board member absent: Eliza Ellsworth - excused.

Guests: Kristen Neville, State Affairs Manager AOTA; David Parish, Lobbyist for APTA-AK and AKOTA.

Quorum in effect; 5 of 7 board members present.

Kristen Neville, State Affairs Manager AOTA gave public comment. She participated in the OT Scope Modernization work group meetings and expressed appreciation for the process and leadership provided by Tori Daugherty. She let the board know that Katie Walker, delegate from AKOTA who also participated in the work group was on vacation and unable to attend today's meeting.

Patricia Rundle, PT, DPT, CLT-LANA, licensed AK physical therapist submitted written testimony opposing scope modernization in general and specifically the list outlining categories of services in the definition of the "Practice of physical therapy" – 08.84.190 (11)(b) of the draft language. Copy of written testimony included.

3. AO359 + AO360

[Administrative Order No. 359: Budget Efficiency](#)
[Administrative Order No. 360: Regulatory Reform](#)

Director Sylvan Robb sent an email to all board chairs regarding AO360. Agencies must reduce regulatory requirements by 15% by the end of 2026 and 25% by the end of 2027 and compiling a State Unified Regulatory Plan each year to ensure consistency and transparency across agencies. No timeframe or more information about what the implementation of this AO will entail is known but the Division will update when available.

4. AO358 Regulations Exemption Request

Board discussion on requesting exemption from AO358 for PT and OT Dry Needling Regulation Projects. Exemption request to be addressed to Director Sylvan Robb detailing reason(s) why regulations are considered an imminent health and safety concern. Discussed need for regulations as a health concern as these services are not being provided to Alaskans due to confusion on providers part if dry needling is within scope for occupational therapy. Lack of regulations are preventing therapists from providing healthcare / caring for patients. The division forwards the exemption request to the Governor's office for approval determination.

Tori Daugherty moved to have Tori Daugherty write a draft letter to request a waiver for PT/OT dry needling regulations project to move forward in the process and Valerie Phelps will write a draft letter to request a waiver for SB 74 to move forward in the process. Letters to be addressed to director Sylvan Robb with the understanding they may go further forward to the Governor's office. Regulations committee to meet 8/15/2025, review, make draft changes, determine if we will

send both letters or just one letter, and then submit AO358 exemption request(s) for board review and approval through OnBoard. Seconded by Rebecca Dean. All in favor; none opposed. Motion passed unanimously.

Action Items:

- Tori Daugherty to draft AO358 exemption request for PHY Dry Needling (PT+OT) Regulations Project for review and editing at 8/15 Regulations Committee meeting.
- Valerie Phelps to draft AO358 exemption request for PHY SB74 Regulations Project for review and editing at 8/15/2025 Regulations Committee meeting. Staff to confirm if the project has been divided into sections and report to Valerie.

5. Legislative Initiatives

A. OT Scope Modernization draft statutory language

Tori Daugherty, OT scope modernization work group leader, provided an overview of the OT scope modernization process and final recommendations. See written final report in public packet. Board discussion on how it is critical that language demonstrates that occupational therapists have the opportunity to progressively heal, aka restore, patients to previous level(s) – improvement of the condition. Board made several recommendations for changes to draft language submitted by work group. (3)(A) added the word “restore”. 08.84.190(8) tests and measurements definition modified to work for both physical therapy and occupational therapy. Discussion on strategy on how definition of “tests and measurements” would provide clarification for imaging once passed for both occupational therapy as well as physical therapy as term already utilized in physical therapy scope of practice 08.84.190(7).

B. PT Scope Modernization draft statutory language

Jonathan Gates, PT scope modernization work group leader, provided an overview of the PT scope modernization process and final recommendations. See written final report in public packet. Discussed possible conflicts with the use of “patient/client” in statutory language that may occur for possible future expansion of scope if physical therapy were to move beyond treatment of humans into providing physical therapy (healthcare) for animals. “One Health” is a possible term that could be utilized that would encompass both human health and animal health. Board discussed conflicts for providing animal physical therapy in Alaska due to Alaska Veterinary scope language.

C. Scope of Practices Committee Recommendation - Scope Modernization

Tori Daugherty provided concerns and recommendations from the Scope of Practices Committee for blending the OT and OT Scope Modernization statutory language drafts.

Rebecca Dean moved the Physical Therapy and Occupational Therapy board adopt the blended definition for “tests and measurements” in the OT Scope Modernization statutory draft language from the Scope of Practices Committee recommendation report. *“Tests and measurements” means the standard methods and techniques used to obtain data about the patient/client including but not limited to imaging, electrodiagnostic and electrophysiological tests and measures.* Motion seconded by Jonathan Gates. All in favor; none opposed. Motion passed unanimously.

Rebecca Dean moved to approve Tori Daugherty as the authorized PHY Board representative to sit on the AKOTA Task Force to advance occupational therapy scope modernization and adopt the OT Scope Modernization draft statutory language as amended. Motion seconded by Jonathan Gates. All in favor; none opposed. Motion passed unanimously. Discussion on process for communication and responsibilities for board representative with regards to AKOTA Task Force. Concern that establishment of a formal PHY Board task force would limit the board’s ability to work quickly during legislative session on advancement of an introduced bill. Scope of Practices Committee to monitor and report on AKOTA Task Force to PHY board as needed to provide transparency. Tori Daugherty to submit reports to committee as needed. Requests related to AKOTA Task Force requiring immediate board action to go through OnBoard (electronic voting system).

Rebecca Dean moved to reconvene the PT Scope Modernization Work Group and send the PT Scope Modernization draft statutory language for further research, stakeholder input, and recommendations. Motion seconded by Tori Daugherty. All in favor; none opposed. Motion passed unanimously. Work group to include additional members – national APTA, FSBPT, and state association representative(s) as well as prior work group members.

- D. Jonathan Gates left the meeting at 11:00 am. Quorum maintained as Valerie Phelps, Tori Daugherty, Rebecca Dean, and Michelle Scott-Weber remained. 4 of 7 board members in attendance.
- E. Executive Administrator position - advancement strategy. Board discussed prior efforts made for potential sponsorship of draft bill language approved by the board.

Rebecca Dean moved that all current board members – Valerie Phelps, Tori Daugherty, Rebecca Dean, Jonathan Gates, Michelle Scott-Weber, and Eliza Ellsworth – be authorized to contact prospective legislative sponsor(s) on behalf of the Board of Physical Therapy and Occupational Therapy for creation of the Executive Administrator position. Michelle Scott-Weber seconded the motion. All in favor; none opposed. Motion passed unanimously.

6. Meeting Summary - Action Items

1. Tori Daugherty to draft AO358 exemption request for PHY Dry Needling (PT+OT) Regulations Project for review and editing at 8/15 Regulations Committee meeting.
2. Valerie Phelps to draft AO358 exemption request for PHY SB74 Regulations Project for review and editing at 8/15/2025 Regulations Committee meeting. Staff to confirm if the project has been divided into sections and report to Valerie.
3. AO358 exemption request(s) to be loaded into OnBoard for board review/approval.
4. OT Scope Modernization Statutory Draft language approved as revised. See attached. I've highlighted the two areas changed per discussion. Tori Daugherty approved as authorized PHY Board representative to sit on AKOTA Task Force to advance OT Scope Modernization Draft language. Scope of Practices Committee to monitor AKOTA Task Force. Tori Daugherty to submit reports to committee as needed. Requests related to AKOTA Task Force requiring immediate board action to go through OnBoard.
5. PT Scope Modernization Draft language to be sent back to reconvened PT Scope work group for further research, stakeholder input, and recommendations. Work group to include additional member(s) from national APTA association, state APTA-AK chapter, and national FSBPT organization as well as original work group members.
6. All current board members authorized to contact prospective legislative sponsors regarding creation of Executive Administrator position for PHY board. Talking points and draft bill language available for download in OnBoard. The tracking sheet of contacts is also in OnBoard. An option to consider would be to add the PHY EA bill as an amendment to one of two similar Board bills already introduced – Dental or Big Game Services – that are also adding executive administrators for their boards. [Senator Jesse Bjorkman](#) (Nikiski - Kenai) is sponsoring [SB29](#), the Big Game Commercial Services Board bill to create an executive administrator. [Representative Frank Tomaszewski](#) (Fairbanks) is sponsoring [HB197](#), the Dental Board bill to create an executive administrator.

7. Adjourn

The Physical Therapy and Occupational Therapy Board meeting was adjourned at 11:08 am on Thursday, August 7, 2025.

Next board meeting scheduled for October 2-3, 2025 at 9:00 am to possibly be held at the Atwood Building, 550 W. 7th Ave, Suite 1535, Anchorage, AK if the travel restrictions of AO358 are lifted. Otherwise, the meeting will be held virtually via Zoom.

These minutes were approved by the board in accordance with PL-12/online voting 08/22/2025.