

Department of Commerce, Community
and Economic Development

Division of Corporations, Business
and Professional Licensing

State Physical Therapy & Occupational Therapy Board

Annual Report

Fiscal Year 2025



Department of Commerce, Community and Economic Development
Division of Corporations, Business and Professional Licensing

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This report is required under Alaska Statute 08.01.070(10).

**State Physical Therapy & Occupational Therapy Board
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**State Physical Therapy & Occupational Therapy Board
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Board Membership *(as of the Date This Report was Approved)*

Date of Final Board Approval: 6/6/2025

Valerie Phelps, Physical Therapist, Chair

Victoria, Daugherty, Occupational Therapist, Secretary

Rebecca Dean, Public Member

Jonathan Gates, Physical Therapist

Michelle Scott-Weber, Occupational Therapist

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Accomplishments

Regulation:

Goal 3.A Enact Compact Licensure

- SB74 enacted 08/31/2024. Regulations Project drafted language completed 02/2025, and currently with Department of Law for review.
- The Physical Therapy Compact Licensure program went live May 1, 2025.

Goal 3.B Investigate PT licensing requirements to create streamlining, particularly related to eliminating the transcripts requirements, as successful graduation from a CAPTE school is required to sit for the NPTE.

- Regulations Project drafted language completed 02/2025 and currently with Department of Law for review.

Goal 4.A The Board will revise continuing education requirements as needed, based on relevance to expand options for demonstrating continuing professional development.

- In Process

Goal 4.B The board will develop additional Continuing education opportunities.

- In Process

Statutory:

Goal 1.A The board will develop an updated statutory scope of practice for Occupational Therapy.

- New workgroup established by the board 10/2024 to move language forward - convened 02/2025 to assess language for updates needed, and champion bill introduction. Meetings held 03/25, 4/8, 4/22, and 5/13 to gather input, update language and create strategies for bill introduction.

Goal 1.B The board will develop an updated statutory scope of practice for Physical Therapy.

- Workgroup established by the board 10/2024 to write draft language and champion bill; Workgroup convened 02/2025 with stakeholders; meetings held 03/25, 4/8, 4/22, and 5/13 to gather input, draft language and create strategies for bill introduction.
- The Board filed a Letter of Support 04/21/2025 for HB 173 and SB 172 – Occupational Therapy Licensure Compact registering their unanimous support of compact licensure for occupational therapists and occupational therapy assistants in Alaska and will continue to testify at the legislative hearings to answer questions from state representatives and senators.

Goal 3.C Seek statutory change to add an Executive Administrator for the board

- Draft statutory language approved by the board 02/28/2025. - Board currently seeking sponsorship and introduction of bill to create Executive Administrator position.

Goal 3.D Seek statutory change in 08.84.150 to exempt Foreign Educated physical therapist applicants (PT/PTA) from licensure when performing 150-hour internship.

- Regulations Project drafted language completed 02/2025 and currently with Department of Law for review.

Action Items:

Goal 2.A The board will work to engage licensees to better access information available to assist in clarifying statutory/regulatory guidelines as it applies to public safety.

- In Process

Goal 2.B The board will work to provide education to the public to improve expected best practices.

- In Process

Goal 5.A The Board continues active communications with State Associations and Educational Programs to recruit and retain engaged Board members.

Goal 5.B The board will stay current on national best practices and standards.

- The Board continues to provide orientation and education for all Board members.
- Board member Rebecca Dean attended the FSBPT Leadership Issues Forum Workshop July 12-14.
- Board Chair Tina McLean attended FSBPT August Dry Needling Competencies Task Force August 2024.

Goal 5.C The Board continues to monitor work force data development options and tools to respond to current and future trends impacting access to care and patient safety.

- In Process

The Board has delegated authority to staff to streamline license application process utilizing “approved pending” status allowing for advance Board review of applications pending the background checks and for efficient timing to approve licenses for the licensees to enter the workforce upon completion of verified clear background check without negative findings.

The Board, Staff and Department continue to investigate the most cost-effective method to provide for automated digital Jurisprudence testing to meet PT Compact requirements.

- In Process

The Board has initiated a PT Scope of Practice Modernization Work Group to bring the Board and Stakeholders within the State and State Associations together to investigate the trends in Physical Therapy Scope of Practice and to recommend any changes as appropriate.

- In Process

The PT OT Board is continuously monitoring and updating the Strategic plan developed in 2024 to ensure the Board is effectively responding to public and licensee needs while carrying out the intent of the legislature through statutes, regulations and policies.

- In Process

Goal 6.A Create a fair and standardized disciplinary matrix from which to address infractions of ethics and breaches of licensing statutes and regulations and clarify board involvement.

- In Process

Statistical:

313 physical and occupational therapy license applications approved 07/01/2024 through 05/30/2025.

- 96 occupational therapy licenses
 - 83 Occupational Therapist licenses
 - 1 Occupational Therapist Limited Permit
 - 3 Occupational Therapist Temporary Permit
 - 9 Occupational Therapy Assistant Licenses
- 217 physical therapy licenses
 - 180 Physical Therapist licenses
 - 4 Physical Therapist Limited permits
 - 2 Physical Therapist Temporary Permits
 - 28 Physical Therapist Assistant Licenses
 - 1 Physical Therapist Assistant Limited Permit
 - 2 Physical Therapist Assistant Temporary Permit

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Activities

Board Meetings

The full board met 4 times during FY 2025

- September 6, 2024: Emergency meeting
- October 24, 2024: Day 1 of biannual meeting
- October 25, 2024: Day 2 of biannual meeting
- February 27, 2025: Day 1 of biannual meeting
- February 28, 2025: Day 2 of biannual meeting
- April 18, 2025: Emergency meeting

Special Workgroup Sessions

Physical Therapy Scope Modernization Workgroup

- March 25, 2025
- April 8, 2025
- April 22, 2025
- May 6, 2025

Occupational Therapy Scope Modernization Workgroup

- March 25, 2025
- April 8, 2025
- April 22, 2025
- May 20, 2025

Standing Committee Meetings

Scope of Practice Committee

- July 8, 2024
- August 16, 2024
- September 13, 2024
- November 15, 2024
- December 20, 2024
- February 7, 2025
- March 7, 2025
- June 6, 2025

Legislative Committee

- February 14, 2025

Regulations Committee

- August 2, 2024
- October 11, 2024
- November 22, 2024
- December 20, 2024
- January 10, 2025
- February 21, 2025
- March 13, 2025
- May 14, 2025
- June 20, 2025

Continuing Competency Committee

- October 3, 2024
- March 13, 2025
- June 12, 2025

Conference Attendance

Board members and/or staff participated in collaborative events hosted by the following professional, national organizations in order to follow national trends in regulatory needs:

- The Federation of State Boards of Physical Therapy
- National Board for Certification in Occupational Therapy
- PT Compact

Stakeholder Collaboration

The Board continually collaborates with state and national professional organizations related to ongoing statutory and regulatory projects, including but not limited to:

- Alaska Occupational Therapy Association (AKOTA)
- Alaska Physical Therapy Association (APTA Alaska)
- American Occupational Therapy Association (AOTA)
- American Physical Therapy Association (APTA)
- The Federation of State Boards of Physical Therapy (FSBPT)
- National Board for Certification in Occupational Therapy (NBCOT)

Legislative Testimony

- Legislative confirmation hearing for two new board members: April 25, 2025
- Testimony for HB173/SB172 (Occupational Therapy License Compact): April 30, 2025

Letters of Support

The Board adopted letters of support for the following bills

- HB173/SB172 (Occupational Therapy Licensure Compact)
- HB147 (Practice of Naturopathy)
- SB121 (Health Insurance Allowable)
- SB124 (Nurse Compact Licensure)
- SB145/HB158 (Universal Temporary Licensure)

Statute and regulation changes

The Board has in-process statute and regulations projects to address scope modernization and right-touch regulation.

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Needs

Statutory Updates, ongoing from FY 2024:

Board will develop an updated statutory definition of Occupational Therapy to bring the professional scope of practice up to current industry standards = Goal 1.A

Board will develop an updated statutory definition of Physical Therapy to bring the professional scope of practice up to current industry standards = Goal 1.B

Statutory Updates, New:

Board will work on whether statutory changes are needed for title protection for DPT for Doctor of Physical Therapy = Goal 2.C and for Doctor of Occupational Therapy

Update the language human to patient or client to allow for diversity /inclusion /equity /belonging – To Do list

Board will work on finding a legislative sponsor to seek statutory change for an Executive Assistant for the PT and OT Licensing Board of Alaska = Goal 3.C

Regulatory Updates, ongoing from FY 2024:

Regulations updates to support compact licensure for physical therapy – Goal 3.A

Regulations updates to remove barriers for Foreign-Educated PT/PTA applicants caused by 6-month post-graduate internship.

Regulations updates to clarify dry needling for physical therapists.

Regulations to clarify dry needling for occupational therapists.

Regulations updates to assist therapists re-entering the profession after extended leave(s) of absence: Service Delivery Plan = Goal 3.D

Regulations updates –elimination of requirement of transcripts verification for application by credentials– redundant due to NPTE test score requirements for other state Licensure by Examination eligibility requirements = Goal 3.B

Regulatory Updates, New:

Regulations updates to revise continuing education requirements as needed, based on relevance, to expand options for demonstrating continuing professional development = Goal 4.A

Regulations updates to develop additional continuing education opportunities = 4.B

Regulations updates to create a fair and standardized disciplinary matrix from which to address infractions of ethics and breaches of licensing statutes and regulations and clarify board involvement = Goal 6.A

Regulations updates to clarify supervision for occupational therapist assistants, in preparation to follow updates to statutory definition of Physical Therapy – Goal 1.A

Regulations updates to clarify supervision for physical therapist assistants, in preparation to follow updates to statutory definition of Physical Therapy – Goal 1.B

Staffing:

Board seats to be filled: One PT or PTA, and one OT and one OT or OTA to have a complete board per state statutes = Goal 5.A

Additional staff, specifically a full-time dedicated executive administrator for this very active board as we move forward with significant statutes and regulations projects = Goal 3.C

Training:

NBCOT attendance to stay current on national best practices and standards = Goal 5.B FSBPT attendance to stay current on national best practices and standards = Goal 5.B Education:

The board will work to provide education to licensees to better clarify statutory/regulatory guidelines as it applies to public safety = Goal 2.A

The board will work to update the jurisprudence questionnaire particularly in lieu of statutes and regulations updates = Goal 2.A

The board will work to provide education to the public to improve the expected best practices = Goal 2.B