

## **Regulation of physiotherapy in Croatia**

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After many years of efforts by physiotherapists in Croatia, The Croatian Parliament passed the Act on Physiotherapy on 3rd October 2008.

What is regulated by the Act on Physiotherapy?

- The protection of education level for practice – basic education physiotherapists acquire after completing the study of physiotherapy that ensures a high level of education in accordance with the regulations in the field of higher education.
- The protection of the title bachelor of physiotherapy.
- The protection of performing activities – bachelor physiotherapist is a medical worker who performs physical therapy procedures and conducts the process of physical therapy.
- The protection of the introduction of additional education – additional education is required for physiotherapist when capacity and complexity of the expected results demand additional education in specific areas of health care. The need, contents and length of the additional educational program for physiotherapists are determined by the regulations of the Croatian Council of Physiotherapists.
- The protection of mandatory permanent education
  1. Physiotherapists in physical therapy are obligated to continuously update their knowledge and acquire new knowledge within the latest developments and discoveries in the field of physiotherapy care.
  2. The contents, deadlines and procedure of permanent professional training for physiotherapists in physical therapy are prescribed by the regulations of the Croatian Council of physiotherapists.
- The protection of terms to perform physical therapy
  1. Physiotherapy can be practiced only by a physiotherapist who is registered as a physiotherapist at the Croatian Council of Physiotherapists and is licensed for practice.
  2. The approval for independent work/licence is a document that gives or denies specific administrative act of the Statute of the Croatian Council of physiotherapists.
  3. Conditions, methods and procedures for granting, renewing and revoking approval for independent work/licence in physical therapy are prescribed by the regulations of the Croatian Council of Physiotherapists.
- Obligations and responsibilities of the physiotherapists:

Obligations:

1. A physiotherapist is obligated to take the patient into physiotherapy procedure according to the doctor's indication for physical therapy. A physiotherapist must make a plan and a program of physical therapy according to the medical diagnosis.
2. Implementation of physiotherapy procedures for established programs, policies and protocols in teamwork.
3. Application of scientifically validated methods and techniques with regard to performance, durable and safe use based on evidence from the fields of physical therapy.

4. Application of methods to solve problems in the implementation of physiotherapy procedures that require analytical skills and critical approach.
5. Constant consultation with a doctor who guides and monitors the patient's condition.
6. Cooperation with all team members and associates.
7. Keeping accurate, detailed and dated medical records in accordance with harmonized standards at European level, to record all the actions performed and which can at any time provide sufficient information about the condition of the patient at all stages of physiotherapy.
8. Conscientious conduct at work.
9. Keeping professional secret.
10. Knowing and respecting patient's rights.
11. Respecting the code of physiotherapy ethics and deontology.
12. Respecting the patient's religious principles.
13. Economic, efficient and effective use of tools and equipment.
14. Acting in the interests of patients.

Responsibilities:

1. For the authenticity of the recorded data.
2. For the patient's safety while performing duties.
3. For taken medicines and equipment to be used for the duration of the activity.

- Required contents of physiotherapy records are defined:
  1. Initial assessment and documentation for each patient.
  2. The goal of the therapy.
  3. Treatment plan/procedure undertaken.
  4. Periodic re-evaluation and its documentation for each patient.
  5. Documented release of a patient including the clinical response to the procedure at the time of release.
  6. Date and time of the service provided and signature of the physiotherapists.
  7. Additional functional tests and measurements must be attached to the record.
  
- Serious violation of physiotherapist's duty is defined:
  1. If the physiotherapist refuses to provide physiotherapy care to a patient when a medical doctor referred her/him.
  2. If the physiotherapist applied incorrect and improper physiotherapy procedures.
  3. If the physiotherapist failed to inform doctors about the worsening condition of the patient during the physiotherapy.
  4. If the physiotherapist does not send the patient to the doctor when within the physiotherapy procedure he or she establishes a report which is not in the physiotherapist's competence.
  5. If due to negligence or ignorance improper conduct harms the health of patients.
  6. If the physiotherapist applies the methods and techniques that are not within the competence of the job description of his/her work.
  7. If he/she violates the honour and reputation of their profession.
  8. When any provision of this Act is violated.
  9. When the code of ethics and deontology is violated.

- The control of quality is also defined:
  1. Quality control of physiotherapy is carried out by a specially trained physiotherapist who is appointed by the employer, in cooperation with the Ministry of Health and the Croatian Council of Physiotherapists.
  2. Quality control of the physiotherapist's work includes: physiotherapy care plan, implementation of physiotherapy procedures, the results of physiotherapy care and its impact on the health status of patients.
  
- The establishment of the Croatian Council of Physiotherapists is defined:

The Croatian Council of physiotherapists was established on 28 January 2009 as an autonomous and independent professional organization with the status of legal persons and public authorities. The Council has these authorities:

  1. It keeps the register of its members.
  2. It issues, renews and revokes the approval of independent work/licence.
  3. It performs supervision over the work of physiotherapists who perform tasks in physiotherapy.

In addition to public authorities, the Council:

- enacts the Code of physiotherapy ethics and deontology;
- cooperates with the Ministry of Health in all areas of interest to physiotherapists, provides expertise and participates in the preparation of regulations in the field of physiotherapy;
- enacts the contents of physiotherapy guidelines for planning and implementation of Physiotherapy care;
- enacts the contents of physiotherapy record;
- proposes the standards and norms for the activity of physiotherapists to the Minister of Health;
- determines the need, contents and duration of additional training program for physiotherapists;
- gives an opinion on the quality of physiotherapy procedures, tools and equipment which are subject to registration;
- enacts general acts which regulate contents, deadlines and procedures for continuing professional development and testing expertise of its members;
- organizes continuing professional development of its members and conducts a proficiency check;
- gives an opinion on the justification of private practice, health institution or company engaged in physical therapy in the network public health service, or outside the network of public health service;
- represents the interests of its members at the conclusion of the contract with the Croatian health insurance and other insurance companies;
- provides effective advertising and way of highlighting the names of private practice;
- sets minimum prices for certain tasks from physiotherapy activities outside the network of public health services and determines the prices for certain tasks from physiotherapy from the scope of voluntary health insurance;
- gives a prior opinion on the act of the Croatian Institute for Health Insurance, which determines how to implement the plan and programs of health care, the formation of cost of health care and other grounds for concluding contracts with health institutions and private health workers who form a network of public health service;
- prescribes the contents, deadlines and verification process expertise of bachelor physiotherapist, assistant physiotherapist and masseur;

- monitors and analyses the issues and cares for coordination of physiotherapy;
- performs professional supervision of bachelor physiotherapist, assistant physiotherapist and masseur;
- monitors and supervises the implementation of the rules of ethics and deontology in physiotherapy and takes appropriate measures in case of their violation;
- cooperates with health inspection of the Ministry of Health;
- coordinates relations among its members and actively participates in solving possible disputes;
- collaborates with the World Health Organisation, the World Confederation for Physical therapy and other international organizations of interest to physiotherapy;
- issues newsletter and other professional editions;
- performs publishing and issuing activity;
- organizes professional seminars, courses, conferences;
- provides professional advices to its members;
- gives professional opinion in the preparation of regulations in the field of prevention and wellness;
- performs other duties specified by the Constitution and other regulations of the Council.