



Foreign Educated Standards Committee Report

Committee Members:

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This year, the Foreign Education Standards Committee met in Alexandria once and had several conference calls/webinars to work on its charge of the ongoing development and review of standards for evaluating the entry-level competence of foreign educated physical therapists and physical therapist assistants.

The committee's main goal is under States' Rights and States' Responsibilities and Professional Standards area of focus and reads:

Continue to develop standards for the determination of substantial equivalence of education and other aspects of entry level competence of foreign educated physical therapists and physical therapist assistants.

The two resources the Federation has made available to credentialing agencies to determine if the education of a foreign trained individual is substantially equivalent are the Coursework Tool for physical therapists and the PTA Tool 2007 for physical therapist assistants.

Coursework Tool: As of July 1, 2009 Coursework Tool 5 became the current tool and will be referred to as the Coursework Tool (CWT); retro tools are now referred to as Coursework Tools 1-4. There has been no change regarding credits or requirements for education to this document.

PTA Tool 2007: PTA Tool 2007 was developed by the Federation in response to the 2008 regulation number CMS-1385, by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS). CMS-

1385 requires a foreign educated physical therapist assistant to show certification of education which is substantially equivalent to an entry-level physical therapist assistant's education in the United States. There has been no change regarding credits or requirements for education to this document.

Credentialing Agency Standards: All credentialing agencies which use the CWT were invited to the third annual summit meeting to continue discussions regarding quality issues in the credentialing of foreign educated physical therapists. The agencies engaged in good dialogue regarding a number of topics including CLEP exams, use of Advanced Placement exams for college credit, and issues with Indian Distance Education Centers. The group agreed to work on two projects to be reported on in the future: 1. A study to coordinate standardization for credit assignments, and 2. Review course descriptions of common CLEP exams and compare to the course descriptions of the common foreign schools.

Supervised Clinical Practice (SCP): The bulk of the committee's work this year has been focused on the pros and cons of requiring a supervised clinical practice for foreign trained individuals. After completing much of the background research last year, the committee determined that a required supervised clinical practice is an important element of public protection.

The committee has created a purpose statement and rationale for supervised clinical practice for foreign educated physical therapists, a background paper with literature review, and a model based on the statutes and regulations of many different jurisdictions.

The committee is currently eliciting stakeholder input on the model via survey and will then finalize it over the remainder of this year. The committee is also working on model language to facilitate the statutory authority for a jurisdiction to require SCP.

A smaller working group within the committee is developing a performance evaluation tool for use specifically with foreign educated physical therapists doing a supervised clinical practice. At this time there are no assessments specifically designed and validated for use with foreign educated individuals.