

VIRGINIA BOARD OF PHYSICAL THERAPY

Physical Therapists performance of the prothrombin time and international normalized ratio (INR) tests in home health settings

The Board of Physical Therapy offers the following guidance in response to PT's or PTA's performing INR's in home health settings:

The performance of finger stick blood specimens is a medical act that may be delegated to "technician personnel" who have been "properly trained" (§ 54.1-2901 of the Code of Virginia). If a PT or PTA performs a finger stick INR, he or she is acting as "technician personnel" and not as a physical therapist because the act is not within the scope of practice of physical therapy. The INR must be performed with a physician's order and the PT or PTA must be properly trained and competent and must make it clear to the patient that the procedure is not physical therapy. When the PT or PTA performs a finger stick, he or she should communicate the results to a nurse so that the nurse can interpret and communicate the results to the physician to make medication modifications. Since the physical therapist is acting in the role of "technical personnel," he or she cannot bill for his or her time as physical therapy.

The following are key guidance points:

- Performing INR's is not considered within the scope of physical therapy
- A PT or PTA must be properly trained in the administration of INR's which must be performed in accordance with a physician's order
- A PT or PTA cannot charge as a physical therapist for performing INR's