

## Physical Therapy

Before we discuss the type of legislation we are seeking or the reasons for asking for such legislation, we feel it is necessary to clarify the main issue involved in this topic of physical therapy legislation.

Some people have learned how to operate equipment which is commonly referred to as physical therapy equipment. This equipment consists of such things as heat lamps, diathermy machines, ultra-violet machines, galvanic and faradic machines for muscle testing, whirlpool apparatus and others. In addition these people may have learned the techniques of how to give massage. They may have watched someone give various types of exercises, and combine their observations with their own ideas and consider themselves equipped to instruct others in exercise.

"A bit of learning is a dangerous thing" - and with this bit of learning these people frequently venture forth on their own to treat - not the normal healthy individual - but the individual suffering from some disability, injury, or disease. They put up shingles labeling themselves as physical therapists. When identified with any group considering legislation, you will usually find them seeking legislation to practice independently of any medical direction.

Physical Therapy (or physiotherapy - the terms are synonymous) is not merely the science of how to use physical therapy techniques and equipment, - it is the science which teaches the why, when, and what type physical therapy is used for the benefit of, and without harm to, the patient with a disability, injury, or disease. In training, the courses which deal with the use of physical therapy in medical conditions are under the direction and instruction of medical doctors. Training must be such that we understand the doctor's language. When he gives a medical diagnosis of a patient referred for physical therapy, it is our responsibility to know just what he means.

To learn individual techniques is a minor phase of training - the important part is learning about physical therapy in relation to the various medical, surgical, and orthopedic conditions in which this form of treatment is beneficially applied, as well as learning the reasons why it must not be used in many other abnormal conditions.

We do not wish to dress up our training and give any false impressions about what our profession embraces - we knew our own limitations and because of them we ask to have legislation which restricts the practice of physical therapy to cases diagnosed and referred by licensed practitioners of medicine. If we had not had enough training and experience to make us realize the grave responsibilities in the treatment of human diseases and disabilities, we would no doubt be appearing before you to ask that legislation give us the right to practice independently of the medical profession.

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