

RETIRED DOCUMENT

This document is retired, effective April 1, 2026, corresponding with the *Health Professions and Occupations Act* (HPOA) in-force date. As this document is retired, it is not considered **standard** or **guidance** under the HPOA. However, until it is replaced by a HPOA-compliant resource, licensees may find it useful as general information for their practice.



College of

HEALTH AND CARE PROFESSIONALS OF BC



Physical Therapists

Starting a Physical Therapy Practice

The College frequently receives questions from physical therapists planning to start a private business and are looking for relevant College resources, as well as general information.

Please note that the College does not regulate physical therapy businesses. The information below is not exhaustive and the College strongly recommends that physical therapists consult with an accountant and/or lawyer for assistance with the setup of a business.

As a starting point, here are some resources that might be helpful to review.

- College Bylaws
- College Standards of Practice
- College Code of Ethical Conduct
- College publication: Consent to Treatment
- College publication: Pause Before You Post
- Advice to Consider: Privacy – What Physical Therapists Need to Know
- Advice to Consider: TeleRehabilitation
- Practice Resources: Establishing a Health Profession Corporation
- Health Professions Act: Part 4 (Health Professions Corporations)

General Considerations

- Where a physical therapist signs a contract, consider including details about processes for when the physical therapist leaves the organization. Examples include how clients will be informed and who is responsible for retaining clinical records. For more information, refer to Advice to Consider: Leaving or Closing a Physical Therapy Practice
- You may be required to obtain a business license. Contact your local municipality for more information.
- Learn more about commercial general liability insurance and whether it is required for the services you will provide.
- Contact your malpractice insurer to make sure your coverage is adequate for the services you will provide.



- Contact the Physiotherapy Association of BC. They have many business-related resources available to members.
- Contact the Medical Services Plan regarding application for a billing number if you do not already have one.
- Discuss with your lawyer and/or accountant the option of sole proprietorship versus corporation for your business structure.
- If using electronic medical records, be sure the contract with your service provider (Jane, Clinic Master, or other) includes who will maintain custody or control of client records, and how access will be granted in the event that you change service providers in the future. Physical therapists are required (in Standard of Practice: Privacy and Record Retention) to retain records and access them upon client request for a minimum of sixteen (16) years from the date of the last entry, or, in the case of a minor, until their age of majority is reached (nineteen (19) years in British Columbia) plus sixteen (16) years.

Considerations when offering community-based services

- Give some thought about how to follow all of the College's Standards of Practice in a community setting such as a client's home, or recreation centre or other community-based location.
 - How will you conduct an assessment/treatment session while ensuring privacy/confidentiality when other family members or other individuals are nearby?
 - How will you ensure you are using safe equipment (including following infection control practices) and managing risk in an environment where you don't personally maintain the equipment?
 - How will you ensure privacy and confidentiality of health information when you transport client files or a laptop in a car or briefcase?
- If you plan to provide physical therapy services using a physical therapist support worker under your direction and supervision, be sure to consider how to ensure safe, competent services in a community-based model, as the level of risk may increase. Advice to Consider: Assigning Tasks to a PTSW may be helpful to review when conducting a risk assessment.

Reviewed: January 19, 2023