

COLLEGE OF PHYSICAL THERAPISTS OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

PRACTICE STANDARD

Number 8

Effective: April 1, 2008

Replaces: June 1998

March 1998

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

A conflict of interest is a breach of an obligation to one's professional ethics which has the effect, or intention, of advancing one's own interest or the interest of others in a way detrimental to the interest of the client, or potentially harmful to the integrity of the physical therapy profession. Conflicts of interest and the appearance of conflicts of interest must be avoided.

A conflict of interest arises when a physical therapist's actions or decisions may reasonably be perceived to be, or are in fact, motivated or influenced by financial gain or the potential for financial gain. A physical therapist shall not render service in any situation that will compromise his/her professional integrity, standard of practice, or place him/her in a conflict of interest.

The physical therapist's professional duty is owed to the client, regardless of who pays for the physical therapy services. All decisions regarding the client must be made in the client's best interest and with the client's full knowledge.

The physical therapist only provides professional services in situations where there is a demonstrated need for the services. The physical therapist must not continue services to a client when the services are no longer required by the client.

Examples of common conflict of interest situations:

- Giving or receiving rebates, or gifts of extraordinary benefit.
- Having an additional relationship beyond the physical therapist/patient relationship where clinical judgment could be, or could be reasonably perceived to be, affected. For example:
 - using the client as a confidant or for personal support
 - inviting the client to social engagements, dating
 - using one's position of power to obtain an opportunity to be involved with clients for financial gain.

Additional Resources:

College of Physical Therapists of Alberta. You've got trouble with gifts (*College Callings* newsletter article November 2000). CPTA website [cited 2007 Oct 11]; Available from: URL: http://www.cpta.ab.ca/resources/ethics_gifts.shtml.

College of Physiotherapists of Ontario. Referral for profit. Information Bulletin (October 2004). CPO website [cited 2007 Oct 11]; Available from: URL: http://www.collegept.org/college/content/pdf/en/guide07/d.Referral_InfoBulletin.pdf.