

FAQ: The Academy of Clinical Electrophysiology & Wound Management (ACEWM) open hearing with the American Board of Physical Therapy Specialties (ABPTS)

Support for ABPTS Clinical Specialization in Wound Management

When?

The open hearing will be held at the American Physical Therapy Association's Combined Sections Meeting (APTA-CSM) on Thursday, January 24th, at 6:30p.m. The hearing will be located in Walter E. Washington Convention Center, Room 143B. Please make sure to check the CSM schedule closer to the date for any updates on the location.

What is ABPTS clinical specialization?

Specialization within the ABPTS is "The process by which a physical therapist builds on a broad base of professional education and practice to develop a greater depth of knowledge and skills related to a particular area of practice, exceeding that of the physical therapist at entry to the profession." ABPTS specialization requires focused, dedicated study and experience that extends beyond practice expectations for entry-level and experienced generalist practitioners. The first physical therapy profession-sponsored certification exam, Cardiopulmonary Certified Specialist, was administered in 1985. Since then, eight additional specialty areas - Clinical Electrophysiology, Geriatrics, Neurology, Oncology, Orthopedics, Pediatrics, Sports, and Women's Health Physical Therapy - have been established. If approved, wound management will be the 10th specialty practice area.

What is the need for PTs to specialize in wound management?

The need is demonstrated in that PTs eligible for specialist certification in the area of wound management will be reaching far beyond generalist practice expectations. There is a "specific area of patient need" that necessitates specialized "knowledge, skill, and experience" that must be intentionally sought out after entry-level training and generalist practice.

What is the benefit of having an ABPTS approved wound management specialization?

An ABPTS specialization would identify physical therapists designated as advanced practitioners in the area of wound management and tissue repair to patients, physicians, other healthcare professionals, and payers. Additionally, wound management would be recognized as an area of specialized practice by our national professional organization finally bringing well-deserved credibility to these physical therapists.

In what aspects of patient care do PTs utilize advanced integumentary knowledge and skill?

Physical therapists specializing in wound management utilize their advanced knowledge and skill in multiple areas of practice including but not limited to: wound examination & evaluation, early identification of infection, wound bed preparation, biomechanics & pressure redistribution, wound debridement, tissue repair and pathologic processes, pharmacologic agents and interactions with healing, differential diagnosis of underlying pathology, individualized transitional offloading including total contact casting, exercise physiology, biophysical agents & therapeutics (e.g. electrical stimulation, ultrasound, negative pressure), vascular

assessment and indications for compression therapy, lymphedema management, functional mobility training, prevention of integumentary dysfunction, referral and engagement of other team members, and patient/caregiver education.

PT wound management specialists tailor the above components to meet each patient's unique needs. This knowledge and skill clearly distinguishes wound management specialists from new graduates, general practitioners, and other ABPTS specialists.

What are the next steps in getting this specialization approved?

ABPTS will hold a formal hearing at the American Physical Therapy Association's Combined Sections Meeting (APTA-CSM) on **Thursday, January 24th, at 6:30 p.m.** ABPTS will determine our ability to move forward with the specialization after the open hearing. If they approve, the ACEWM will present a motion to accept the specialization at the House of Delegates in June 2019.

How can I help support this specialization?

Support may be provided by attending the open hearing at CSM or by writing a letter of support which can be presented to ABPTS at the open hearing. If you can attend the open hearing, please let us know by emailing the ACEWM President, Karen Gibbs, PT, PhD, DPT, CWS at kgibbs@txstate.edu. If you are unable to attend and would like to provide a letter of support, that works too! Whether you attend in person or write a letter of support, here are a few ideas for you to consider mentioning:

- **Reason(s) you are in support of the wound management clinical specialization**
- **How the specialization might impact quality of care for patients**
- **Personal experience you have working with patients with wounds**
- **Personal experience you have working with physical therapists in wound management**
- **Your thoughts on how the profession-based specialization might impact physical therapist participation in interdisciplinary wound management teams**
- **How you think this might impact physical therapists continuing to participate in wound management in the future**
- **How the specialization might impact you and your career**
- **Your thoughts on how therapists with this credential will be viewed and/or sought out by the lay and medical communities**
- **Describe your practice and general "stake" in the specialization and/or care of patients with wounds**

If you attend the open hearing, what you say does not need to be lengthy, just stand up and quickly say why the specialization is important to you and that you support it. If you cannot attend and decide to write a support letter, it too does not need to be lengthy. Short and sweet works, but please do include your full name, credentials, professional affiliation/employment, email, and address and send to Karen Gibbs at kgibbs@txstate.edu. Karen will print all letters and present them to ABPTS at the open hearing.

Thank you for taking the time to read this information and consider supporting our specialization!

The Academy of Clinical Electrophysiology and Wound Management