

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**ONTARIO PHYSIOTHERAPY ASSOCIATION APPLAUDS ON
LEGISLATION TO EXPAND PHYSIOTHERAPY SCOPE OF PRACTICE**

(Toronto, May 11, 2009): The Ontario Physiotherapy Association (OPA) enthusiastically welcomes the Regulated Health Professions Statute Law Amendment Act, 2009 tabled in the Ontario Legislature earlier today by the Hon. David Caplan, Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. A section of that Bill, if passed, will amend the *Physiotherapy Act, 1991* to expand the scope of practice and authorized acts of the physiotherapy profession in Ontario to better reflect the competencies physiotherapists bring to the health system and remove other barriers to access to care.

Physiotherapists are one of the 21 healthcare professions governed by the *Regulated Health Professions Act* (RHPA). Under the RHPA, the scope of practice statement in each profession-specific Act describes what that profession does. The list of authorized acts in each profession-specific Act covers those procedures that constitute a significant risk of harm and are, therefore, reserved for those professions that have demonstrated the requisite competencies to perform them safely and effectively.

Mark Beadle, the President of the Ontario Physiotherapy Association and a practising physiotherapist, welcomed the legislation and stated, "The physiotherapy profession has advocated for this for some time and we applaud Mr. Caplan and the McGuinty government for taking this important initiative to improve the public's access to health services. We hope all MPPs will support these changes."

Dorianne Sauvé, the CEO of the Ontario Physiotherapy Association explained, "This legislation will also enhance interprofessional collaboration through a better understanding by the public and others in the health system of what we can do based on our abilities and competencies. It will open doors on how we can best contribute to the transformation of the health system in Ontario."

The provisions of the sections of the Bill amending the *Physiotherapy Act, 1991* are prompted by an extensive review conducted by the Health Professions Regulatory Advisory Council (HPRAC) last year. HPRAC's detailed analysis and recommendations were relayed to the Minister in September 2008 and were released by the Ministry last November for public and stakeholder comment.¹

"Once in force and effect, this legislation will have an immediate impact on the healthcare delivery system in Ontario. There are over 6,800 physiotherapists registered to practise in Ontario and physiotherapists practise in nearly every healthcare delivery stream: in hospitals, in Community Health Centres, in long-term care homes and other collective residences, in home care through Community Care Access Centres, in community-based private and public clinics, in industry, in the rehabilitation of injured workers under the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board and for motor vehicle accident claimants", Mark Beadle explained. "Each stream will benefit from this Bill."

The OPA is now studying the details of the Bill and will be making additional comments during its review by the Standing Committee.

The Ontario Physiotherapy Association is the professional association for physiotherapists in Ontario. The OPA currently represents over 4,800 members and is the Ontario Branch of the Canadian Physiotherapy Association.

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¹ "Review of the Scope of Practice of Physiotherapy", Chapter 5 of The Interim Report to the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care on Mechanisms to Facilitate and Support Interprofessional Collaboration among Health Colleges and Regulated Health Professionals: Phase II, Part I.

BACKGROUND

Physiotherapy is one of the oldest regulated healthcare professions in Ontario. Beginning in 1954, physiotherapy was regulated under the *Drugless Practitioners Act*. Since 1993 it has been regulated under the *Regulated Health Professions Act, 1991* and its profession-specific Act, the *Physiotherapy Act, 1991*.

The professional regulatory body for physiotherapy in Ontario is the College of Physiotherapists of Ontario established under the *Physiotherapy Act, 1991*.

There are currently over 6,800 physiotherapists registered to practise by the College of Physiotherapists of Ontario.

In order to be eligible to apply for registration to practise as a physiotherapist in Ontario an applicant must have graduated from an accredited university physiotherapy program and successfully completed a national exam and other conditions established by the College of Physiotherapists of Ontario.

Five universities in Ontario offer physiotherapy programs and graduates in Ontario receive a Master's degree as their entry level qualification.

Access to hospital in-patient or out-patient physiotherapy clinics is an insured service under the *Canada Health Act*.

Physiotherapy is one of the mandated services under the (Ontario) *Long-Term Care Act* for home care services through Community Care Access Centres.

Physiotherapy for persons under 19 years of age, 65 years of age or older and those on Ontario disability programs may obtain OHIP-funded physiotherapy through community-based Designated Physiotherapy Clinics.

All Long Term Care Homes in the province have access to funding for physiotherapy services for their residents.

Physiotherapy services for injured workers are paid for under the (Ontario) *Workplace Safety and Insurance Act*

Physiotherapy services for motor accident vehicle claimants are covered under the Statutory Accidents Benefits Schedule under the (Ontario) *Insurance Act*.

Physiotherapy services are included in most extended health benefits plans.

The Health Professions Regulatory Advisory Council (HPRAC) conducted a scope of practice review of physiotherapy in 2008 and made its recommendations to the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care in September, 2008 [See: "Review of the Scope of Practice of Physiotherapy", Chapter 5, [An Interim Report to the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care on Mechanisms to Facilitate and Support Interprofessional Collaboration Among Health Colleges and Regulated Health Professionals: Phase II, Part 1.](#)] Physiotherapy was also included in HPRAC's "non-physician prescriber review" conducted in the Fall of 2008. [See: "Prescribing and Use of Drugs in the Profession of Physiotherapy", Chapter 15, [Critical Links: Transforming and Supporting Patient Care.](#)]

Ontario Physiotherapy Association web site: <http://www.opa.on.ca/>

College of Physiotherapists of Ontario web site: <http://www.collegept.org/>