

ALASKA LEGISLATURE

HONORING

100 YEARS OF THE AMERICAN PHYSICAL THERAPY ASSOCIATION

The members of the Thirty-Second Alaska State Legislature recognize the American Physical Therapy Association (APTA) for its dedication to improving the health of society over the past 100 years and thank APTA Alaska for actively enhancing the health and wellness of Alaskans since 1970.

APTA was originally founded in 1921 as the American Women's Physical Therapeutic Association, with 274 members nationwide. Over the next 100 years, the organization has grown to more than 100,000 members across fifty-one state and territorial chapters.

The Alaska chapter of APTA was established in 1970, twelve years after the first Alaskan physical therapists were licensed. For the last fifty years, APTA Alaska has promoted the profession of physical therapy and enhanced the movement, health, and wellness in the Alaska communities they serve.

Physical therapists in Alaska are an important, direct-access choice for patients with musculoskeletal problems. Physical therapists and physical therapist assistants provide cost-effective interventions that can lower the consumption of pain medications, reduce the need for invasive procedures, and improve quality of life.

Reconstruction aides, the predecessors to modern physical therapists, came onto the national scene in the early 1900s, playing an integral role in the recovery of World War I soldiers. Building on these efforts, physical therapist involvement in WWII recovery and the national response to the 1950s' polio epidemic demonstrated their value as medical professionals and war heroes, confirming that physical therapists had a major role to play in the future of America's health.

The US Department of Health and Social Services reports that 80% of adults and adolescents do not get enough physical activity on a daily basis. Physical therapists and physical therapist assistants are critical to health service teams as movement experts who work to improve quality of life by addressing pain or chronic conditions that limit participation in physical activities. Their work reduces the risk of chronic diseases, enhances fitness, and helps prevent injuries through hands-on care, patient education, and rigorously researched prescribed movement.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, physical therapists and physical therapist assistants in Alaska have continued to treat the most vulnerable in our communities. They have played an essential role in the lives of those recovering from the most severe effects of COVID-19, both in and out of the hospital. Their efforts build on a long and proud history of crisis recovery response.

The members of the Thirty-Second Alaska State Legislature join Alaskans in recognizing APTA and its members as essential partners in meeting the future health and wellness needs of Alaska and thank them for their many years of dedicated service to our communities.



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