

**Mississippi State Board of Physical Therapy  
5 Year Strategic Plan  
FY 2022 – FY 2026**

**1. Comprehensive Mission Statement:**

The mission of the Mississippi State Board of Physical Therapy is to safeguard the public health, safety, and welfare of citizens by establishing minimum qualifications, creating exclusive titles corresponding to the level of qualifications and regulating the competency of individuals who wish to offer physical therapy services in the State of Mississippi.

**2. Philosophy**

The Mississippi State Board of Physical Therapy is committed to continually safe guarding Mississippi patients/clients through ensuring the highest degree of professional conduct by those physical therapists and physical therapist assistants engaged in offering physical therapy services. The Board endeavors to promote the highest professional standards, to indiscriminately enforce rules and regulations and provide the highest quality of public services while respecting the rights of individual practitioners and patient/clients through oversight of the practitioners.

**3. Relevant Statewide Goals and Benchmarks**

Statewide Goal #1.: To protect Mississippians from risks to public health and to provide them with the health-related information and access to quality healthcare necessary to increase the length and quality of their lives.

Relevant Benchmarks #1.:

- Number of practitioners needed to remove health professional shortage are designated by type of practitioner
- Preventable hospitalizations (discharge rate among the Medicare population for diagnoses amenable to non-hospital-based care)
- Number of persons treated in emergency rooms for non-emergency issues and costs, for Medicaid patients and for all patients
- Number of individuals on waiting list for home-and community-based services
- Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnostic and Treatment (EPSDT)/well child screening rates for Medicaid and Children’s Health Insurance Program (CHIP) children
- Percentage of children who have one or more emotional, behavioral, or developmental conditions
- Hospital acquired infection rate
- Rate of complications among diabetes patients

- Adult compliance with recommended levels of aerobic physical activity (percentage of adults who report participating in 150 minutes or more of aerobic physical activity per week)
- Occupational fatalities (number of fatalities from occupational injuries per 100,000 workers)

Statewide Goal #2.: To protect the public's safety, including providing timely and appropriate responses to emergencies and disasters and to operate a fair and effective system of justice.

Relevant Benchmarks #2.:

- Quickly mobilize practitioners who can assist with disaster management through special licensure for qualified out of state practitioners.
- Special criteria for re-licensure of individuals that are serving in the National Guard or any branch of armed services

Statewide Goal #3.: To ensure that Mississippians are able to develop to their full potential by having their basic needs met, including the need for adequate food and shelter and a healthy, stable, and nurturing family environment or a competent and caring system of social support.

Relevant Benchmarks #3.:

- Substantiated incidence of child abuse or neglect (per 1,000 population)
- Percentage of the population of persons with a disability who are employed
- Percentage of individuals completing vocational rehabilitation services who obtain employment

Statewide Goal #4.: To create an efficient government and an informed and engaged citizenry that helps to address social problems through the payment of taxes, the election of capable leaders at all levels of government, and participation in charitable organizations through contributions and volunteerism.

Relevant Benchmarks #4.:

- Number of government employees per 10,000 population (broken out by federal, state, and local)
- Administrative efficiency: Expenditures on state government administrative activities as a percentage of total operational expenditures
- Average wait time for state government services
- Regulatory efficiency: average length of time to resolution of documented complaints to professional licensing agencies
- Number and average cost of regulatory actions taken, by regulatory body and type of action
- State dollars saved by providing government services online (e.g., document retrieval, issuance of new business permits, license renewal)

Statewide Goal #5.: To make available an accessible, quality public higher education at an affordable cost that prepares Mississippians to become productive, financially self-sufficient members of society while meeting the human resource needs of Mississippi and its employers, including the creation of new jobs through the commercialization of university-based research.

Relevant Benchmarks #5.:

- Licensure exam pass rate for community college students who successfully complete a technical or certificate program in a field requiring state and or national licensure
- Percentage of certificate graduates employed in jobs in their field of study within a year of graduation (job placement rate)
- Licensure exam pass rate for graduate school graduates, by discipline
- Percentage of University of Mississippi Medical Center (UMMC) physical therapists program graduates practicing in Mississippi after licensure
- Percentage of graduates in high-need disciplines practicing in Mississippi, by discipline

#### **4. Overview of the Agency 5-Year Strategic Plan:**

The Mississippi State Board of Physical Therapy has targeted four priorities for the next five years. First, the Board will continue to offer heightened communication and licensing options through expansion and full implementation of the online database of physical therapists and physical therapist assistants. This augmentation will decrease office costs, streamline communication systems and increase consumer patient access to physical therapy services. The Board will continue to use this online database to require that all licensed physical therapy practitioners complete their renewal online, including submission of a current photo every four years, address of residence and business address. The Board is looking into requiring all physical therapy practitioners to complete an online jurisprudence exam on the Board's rules and regulations. In addition, the Board has implemented and will continue to require all physical therapists and physical therapist assistants to upload and store proof of their continuing competence through a free online Board approved organization. The free system is a resource for recording and tracking their continuing competence hours for the entirety of a therapist's career. The Board will continue to investigate mechanisms to require random criminal background checks during the licensure renewal process.

Secondly, the Board will continue to improve the pre-licensure program criteria and examination process. This includes regulating the amount of times an applicant may take the licensure examination as well as giving potential practitioners an earlier opportunity to sit for the examination and the amount of time between graduation and licensure date. Explore updating the Board's pre-licensure jurisprudence exam.

The third priority for the Board is to continue tracking the capability, efficiency and quality of the licensed physical therapy practitioners through monitoring continuing competency, conducting onsite random audits that includes verifying that a current license is posted in a public place within the practice setting, utilizing criminal background checks, posting a list of licensees on Board website, processing complaints, holding hearings, renewing licenses,

exploring methodology to enhance procedures for disasters/pandemics, certifying physical therapists in dry needling, enhancing telehealth criteria, continuing workforce updates, and providing the compact licensure privilege. During the past year, the initial process for obtaining a compact privilege license was completed. In addition, the Board plans to identify areas of additional advanced and enhanced practice opportunities, develop criteria for practitioners to offer these services and develop methods to identify these practitioners for the public.

The Board's fourth priority is to use current technology to continue to move all functions of the Board toward a paperless system. The implementation of mandatory online applications and renewals are currently in place. This technology now allows the Board to move toward communicating entirely through electronic means (i.e., newsletters, renewal notices, and other correspondence that includes emergency notifications related to disasters/pandemics, etc.). Physical therapists and physical therapist assistants are currently editing information that is accessible to them in their profile and utilizing the online payment system to pay fees. Board meeting packets will continue to be sent to the members through a secure link and uploaded to an electronic device to be used during Board meetings. The use of virtual technology for meetings in special situations.

## **5. Agency's External/Internal Assessment**

- 1) Changes in state or federal laws related to the practice of physical therapy.
- 2) Economic pandemic or catastrophic conditions that relate to the number of physical therapy practitioners needed or that can be successfully employed.
- 3) Unpredictable changes in health care programs/legislation and changes in governmental paperwork.
- 4) Rapid advances in healthcare knowledge and technologies.
- 5) Changes in the diversity of the state population served by the practitioners and agency.
- 6) Number of licensee applicants impacts the collection of fees.
- 7) Complexity of the complaints can affect attorney fees, investigation costs, travel funds and other meeting costs.
- 8) Changes in the online database system positively impacts personnel efficiency.
- 9) Emerging new technologies and mechanisms to conduct the licensure program.
- 10) Amount of time required for Board members to assimilate new trends and uses of technology.
- 11) Actions taken by the professional organization and the national licensure bodies.
- 12) Annual internal control review.
- 13) The time requirement for the administrative process in obtaining clearance for implementation of new rules and regulations.

At a minimum of once quarterly, the Board meets to continue the on-going process of evaluating all aspects of mandated duties and responsibilities. Through these quarterly meetings, the Board determines the needs and requirements of patients/clients. The Board also makes decisions on requests and updates any rules and regulations that need to be revised. Inquiries made by practitioners of the Board rules and regulations are responded to and later shared electronically. As part of this process, they provide direction for the Executive Director, make decisions on requests, evaluate the progress made towards established goals and objectives, and make changes when appropriate within budgetary constraints. This includes implementing the policy rules and

standards set forth in the Rules and Regulations and standards/processes for initial licensure and renewal. Finally, the Board evaluates and discusses the progress made towards its mission and philosophy.

The agency already has in place some internal mechanisms to monitor and evaluate performance such as the annual internal control review required by DFA and by utilizing a third party to perform many of the accounting tasks for the agency. The Board will continue to develop additional procedures to continue this effort.

Through interfacing with Mississippi Physical Therapy Association, American Physical Therapy Association, the membership of the Federation of State Physical Therapy Licensure Boards, and the online offerings of International Network of Physiotherapy Regulatory Authorities, the Board continues to identify changes in the field of practice and regulation. From this information the Board assesses how these changes may affect the physical therapy practice and practitioners in the State. Then Board determines if its regulations continue to meet the needs of the public within the authority granted by law.

## **6. Agency Goals, Objectives, Strategies and Measures by Program:**

### **6.1 Agency Goals by Program**

#### **Program 1: Licensure & Regulation**

**GOAL A: Issue initial licenses and renewals to individuals who meet Board approved standards and qualifications** (Miss. Code Ann. Section 73-23- 43, 73-23-47, 73-23-49, 73-23-51 & 73-23-57)

**OBJECTIVE A.1.** Develop and implement the quality standards that are required for individuals to obtain a license or advanced certification as a physical therapists or physical therapist assistants including ongoing continuing competency.

*Outcome:* Physical therapists and physical therapist assistants with current professional skills

*Outcome:* Physical therapists and physical therapist assistants with advanced practice skills verified through certification will be able to provide specialized services for patients/clients with specific needs

**A.1.1. STRATEGY:** Offer an online comprehensive application that requires proof of good moral character, including criminal background check, Board jurisprudence exam, and meeting licensure requirements to practice as a physical therapist or physical therapist assistant.

*Output:* Physical therapist and physical therapist assistant who have knowledge of professional standards, ethical practices and legally required standards

*Output:* Additional physical therapists and physical therapist assistants

*Efficiency:* Optimizes the safety, access to services and quality skills available to Mississippi patient/clients

**A.1.2. STRATEGY:** License applicants meeting licensure requirements based upon completion of their written qualifications.

*Output:* Total number of applications submitted

*Output:* Practitioner information added to an online database system

*Output:* Verification of license for the public via online

*Efficiency:* Cost of application processing covered by fee

*Efficiency:* A decrease in cost for processing due to automation

**A.1.3. STRATEGY:** Update online application process when necessary to reflect changes in Board policy, federal or state laws, national licensure bodies and professional standards.

*Output:* The Board in conjunction with the Executive Director reviews and makes changes as appropriate but minimally on an annual basis.

*Efficiency:* Keeps agency in compliance with federal/state laws, national licensure bodies and professional standards

*Efficiency:* Promotes accessible safe patient-consumer services for the public

**A.1.4 STRATEGY:** Examine new graduate, foreign trained, licensees from other states for entry level competency prior to licensing and maintain a list of compact privilege licensees.

*Output:* More qualified physical therapists and physical therapist assistants

*Output:* Added physical therapists and physical therapist assistants

*Efficiency:* Ensuring all applicants meet identical entry level competency

**OBJECTIVE A.2.** Oversee online renewal process for compliance with continuing competency, ethics, updated practitioner photo, place of residence and business address(s).

*Outcome:* More qualified physical therapist and physical therapist assistant practitioners

*Outcome:* Decreased agency renewal cost

*Outcome:* Continued public protection related to current practitioner photographs and practice locations

*Efficiency:* Provides workforce data

**A.2.1. STRATEGY:** Posting the renewal instructions and application online.

*Output:* More online and fewer paper renewals

*Output:* Less staff time required at renewal time with the online process

*Efficiency:* Offset of administrative costs through less staff devoted to this activity

**GOAL B: Regulation and enforcement of the laws governing licensed physical therapists and physical therapist assistants (Miss. Code Ann. Section 73-23-31 – 73-23-67)**

**OBJECTIVE B.1.** Establish procedures to ensure compliance with standards, laws, rules and regulations.

*Outcome:* Identical qualifications for each practitioner category

*Outcome:* Change in the number of reported complaints

*Efficiency:* Decrease the questions related to legal practice

*Efficiency:* Decrease in staff time needed for responding to questions on practice

**B.1.1. STRATEGY:** Using the statute to develop rules and regulations for implementation.

*Output:* An online guide to the rules and regulations of the Board

*Output:* Establishes standardized policies for physical therapy practitioners

*Efficiency:* The online posting the rules and regulations facilitates communication with practitioners/public and moves the Board towards becoming a paperless agency

**OBJECTIVE B.2.** Regulate and enforce state laws, rules and regulation primarily through biannual renewal and onsite random audit process of practitioners.

*Outcome:* Standard qualifications for physical therapists and physical therapist assistants

*Outcome:* Facilitates practitioner compliance

**B.2.1. STRATEGY:** Update regulations and state statute when necessary to reflect changes in Board policy, federal-state laws, current professional practice and national licensure bodies.

*Output:* Board proposes changes to regulation through utilizing the state administrative procedure process

*Output:* Board proposes changes to state statute through legislature

*Output:* Keeps agency up to date with changes in the external healthcare arena

*Efficiency:* Costs incurred for Board meetings, legal counsel, paperwork, and legislative activity are met through non-state funds

**B.2.2. STRATEGY:** Renewal of physical therapists and physical therapist assistant licensees on a biannual basis utilizing an online program.

*Output:* Increase use of online system

*Output:* Decrease number of paper renewals

*Efficiency:* Reduction in agency cost for renewals is decreased

*Explanatory:* The cost reduction of online renewals enables the agency to provide additional services without employing additional personnel

**B.2.3. STRATEGY:** Mandate continuing competency activities biannually.

*Output:* Require 30 hours of competency activities

*Output:* Allow at least 15 CCUs in the certified activities category and a maximum of 15 CCUs in the approved activities category

*Output:* Require the utilization of the free online Board approved system to record and track CCUs

*Output:* Restrict CCUs to Board approved courses and presenters

*Output:* Keep practitioners updated with current practice

*Efficiency:* Practitioners are more likely to use current efficiency, and quality treatment methods

**B.2.4. STRATEGY:** Advise practitioners and the public of updates and/or changes to rules and regulations as appropriate.

*Output:* Post online any proposed and/or adopted rule changes; and in newsletter(s)

*Output:* Post dates for Board meetings online

*Output:* Mail identifying proposed and/or changes to interested parties

*Efficiency:* Dissemination of information online results in cost reduction the agency

**OBJECTIVE B.3.** Monitor current best physical therapy practices.

**B.3.1. STRATEGY:** Participate in state physical therapy association meetings.

*Output:* Executive Director is invited to present rules and regulations related to practice frequently at physical therapy meeting

*Output:* Board practitioner members participate in education sessions at meetings

*Efficiency:* Enables the agency to react to changes of the practice environment more readily

*Explanatory:* Cost for meeting participation is covered by the requesting organization, at times the agency or Board practitioner

**B.3.2. STRATEGY:** National licensure conferences.

*Output:* Board members and staff annually attend national licensing activities/meetings related to their roles and responsibilities

*Efficiency:* Staff and Board members are able to be more effective in fulfilling their Board roles and responsibilities

*Explanatory:* Incurred expenses are reimbursed by the national association

**B.3.3 STRATEGY:** National professional meetings and conferences.

*Output:* Board members often attend national physical therapy educational activities and meetings related to their practice settings.

*Efficiency:* Board members are more effective in recognizing current practice trends

*Explanatory:* Incurred expenses are reimbursed by the Board member

**OBJECTIVE B.4.** Conduct onsite random audits, investigate complaints against practitioners and hold hearings when appropriate to implement action as needed.

*Outcome:* Safeguard the public by taking action against incompetent practitioners

*Outcome:* Provide due process



*Outcome:* Respond to public concerns promptly

**B.4.1. STRATEGY:** Use established investigatory policies and administrative hearings for any charge or complaint as appropriate.

*Output:* Promptly respond to complaints made to the Board

*Output:* Protect the public while ensuring the rights of the practitioner

*Output:* Notify practitioners and if indicated schedule and hold hearings

*Efficiency:* Expenses incurred for investigations and hearings are covered by fees imposed on the practitioner

*Explanatory:* The fees imposed are based on the cost of the investigatory, legal, hearing processes and severity of the offense

**B.4.2. STRATEGY:** Restriction, suspension or revocation of licenses when deemed necessary.

*Output:* Complaints are addressed and resolved by the Board

*Output:* Fewer practitioners in non-compliance

*Output:* Disciplined practitioners posted online

*Efficiency:* Expenses incurred for investigations and hearings are covered by fees imposed on the practitioner

*Explanatory:* The fees imposed are based upon the cost of the investigatory, legal, hearing processes and severity of the offense

*Explanatory:* Public awareness of Board disciplinary actions is posted on the website as a part of safe guarding the public