

Comissão Parlamentar de Trabalho e Segurança Social,
Assembleia da República
Palácio de São Bento

To whom it may concern

I am writing in support of the proposal to establish an Order of Physiotherapists in Portugal.

The World Confederation for Physical Therapy (WCPT) is the sole international organization for physical therapy (physiotherapy), representing more than 450,000 physical therapists (physiotherapists) worldwide through its 109 member organizations. WCPT was founded in 1951 and since 1956, it has been a non-governmental organization (NGO) in official relations with the World Health Organization (WHO). WCPT is committed to moving physiotherapy forward and to promoting the significant role the profession plays globally in improving health and wellbeing. WCPT encourages high standards of physiotherapy research, education and practice.

Since 1966, the Portuguese Association of Physiotherapists (APFisio) has been an active member of WCPT. APFisio have a responsibility to support, promote and advance the role of physiotherapists ensuring that standards are in place to deliver quality service to the public. WCPT member organizations accept WCPT policies and work to achieve the standards of practice and education as described in the WCPT's policies and guidelines.

Physiotherapists are qualified to undertake a comprehensive examination/assessment of the patient/client to formulate a diagnosis and prognosis/plan of care, implement a therapeutic intervention/treatment program if appropriate, evaluate the outcome of any intervention/treatment, and determine discharge arrangements. WCPT believes that physiotherapist entry level education should equip physiotherapists to be first contact autonomous practitioners, able to assess and treat patients/clients without referral from another medical practitioner or other third party. The use of the title of Doctor of Physiotherapy has already been granted to physiotherapists in some countries. Prescribing medication, requesting imaging and laboratory tests, treating with intra and extra articular injections, performing diagnostic procedures, e.g., needle electromyography and diagnostic ultrasound are within the scope of practice of physiotherapists in a rapidly growing number of countries across the globe, and others are striving to follow the same footsteps.

The WCPT is supportive of any legislation that will empower the Portuguese physiotherapist to cope with the challenges of the health sector locally, regionally, and internationally.

WCPT believes the titles physiotherapist or physiotherapist and appropriate abbreviations (for example PT, FT, physio) as such or in any translation, are the sole preserve of persons who hold qualifications approved by national professional associations. WCPT believes that members of the public wishing to access the services of a physiotherapist/ physiotherapist are entitled to know that recognised qualifications are held and that professional behaviour is governed by ethical codes.

Thus the WCPT calls on the governments of all member organisation countries to enact legislation, where it does not already exist, to protect the public by limiting the use of these titles to appropriately qualified persons. This is because the regulation of the physiotherapists' practice serves both the development of the physiotherapy itself, and the public interest. Clients who look for physiotherapy expect and deserve a safe and high quality service. A regulatory body – such as the proposed Order of Physiotherapists in Portugal - assures the public that a high standard of service is delivered by a qualified and registered physiotherapist.

The [WCPT Policy statement: Protection of title](#) clearly articulates our position on this matter. **WCPT strongly supports the proposal to establish an Order of Physiotherapists in Portugal.**

If you have any other questions about WCPT's position in relation to this issue do not hesitate to contact me.

Kind regards

Jonathon

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Chief Executive Officer



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