

## **Board of Physical Therapy**

### **Guidance on Electromyography (“EMG”), Sharp Debridement, and Removal of Sutures, Staples, or Surgical Drains and the Practice of Physical Therapy**

#### **Electromyography (“EMG”)**

EMG is an invasive procedure and requires referral and direction from a licensed practitioner, in accordance with Virginia Code § 54.1-3482. A practitioner’s order for EMG should be in writing; if the initial referral is received orally, it must be followed up with a written referral. The procedure is an advanced skill and only within the scope of practice for those physical therapists who have had specialized, post-professional preparation and training.

#### **Sharp Debridement**

Sharp debridement is an invasive procedure and requires referral and direction from a licensed practitioner, in accordance with Virginia Code § 54.1-3482. Sharp debridement requires specific skills and training in wound care and on-going evaluation by the physical therapist. If, in the professional judgment of the physical therapist responsible for the patient, the physical therapist assistant has the competency, advanced skills, and post entry-level training to perform sharp debridement, it may be delegated to the assistant.

#### **Sutures, Staples, or Surgical Drains**

The removal of sutures or staples is an invasive procedure and requires referral and direction from a licensed practitioner, in accordance with Virginia Code § 54.1-3482. The removal of sutures or staples requires specific skills and training in wound care and on-going evaluation by the physical therapist. If, in the professional judgment of the physical therapist responsible for the patient, the physical therapist assistant has the competency, advanced skills, and post entry-level training to perform the removal of sutures or staples, it may be delegated to the assistant.

The removal of surgical drains by a physical therapist is outside of the scope of practice of physical therapy.