

# The challenge of developing regulation of Physiotherapy/ Physical Therapy in Ireland

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Irish Society of Chartered Physiotherapists  
(ISCP) is the sole professional body  
representing chartered physiotherapists in  
Ireland

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- The background features two stylized human figures. One is a light blue figure on the left, and a larger one is a light green figure on the right. Both figures have a circular head and a curved, open-bottom body, suggesting movement or a specific posture. The green figure is partially behind the blue one.
1. Background
  2. Education and Training
  3. Historical Context
  4. Regulation
  5. Professional Practice
  6. Challenges
  7. Summary

# Physiotherapy and Physical Therapy in Ireland

- In all Member Organisations of WCPT these titles are synonymous
- In Ireland, there has been no protection of either of these titles
- Currently, anyone can call themselves a physiotherapist or physical therapist
- A Chartered Physiotherapist is a member of the Irish Society of Chartered Physiotherapists (ISCP)

# The matter of title

- Other groups of practitioners use the title Physical Therapist
- This leads to much confusion for the public
- Public safety is not served unless both titles are protected in one register

# Entry-level physiotherapy education in Ireland

- Details refer to Physiotherapy & **NOT** Physical Therapy
- Physiotherapy entry-level programmes are BSc (Hons) degree programmes at 4 Higher Education Institutes (HEI's)
  - Trinity College, University College, Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland – all in Dublin
  - And University of Limerick
- 4-year Honours degree programmes
- Accredited by the ISCP on 5-year cycle

# Historical context

- **1983** Establishment of ISCP
- **1989** European Council Directive 89/48/EEC
- **92/51/EEC** 2<sup>nd</sup> general system for recognition of professional qualifications
- **1996** ISCP appointed the Designated Authority for Physiotherapy in Ireland
- **2005/36/EC** further Directive on professional qualifications

# Historical context continued

- **2005** Health & Social Care Professions Act
- **2006** The Health & Socials Care Professionals Council - CORU established
- **2008** Directive 2005/36/EC transposed
- **ISCP** will remain the Designated Authority until the Physiotherapy Register opens



# Regulation: establishment of PRB

Health & Social Care  
Professions Council - CORU

- Physiotherapy Registration Board, maybe end 2015
- Physiotherapists will be protected automatically, Physical Therapist will NOT
- Operational budget of CORU cut significantly, hence delay

ISCP

- ISCP accredits entry level Physiotherapists/ Physical Therapists educated outside Ireland for equivalence with graduates from BSc (Hons) programme in Ireland
- Deals with complaints made against its members
- Provides CPD (obligatory for annual membership renewal)

# CORU COUNCIL

Chair, 1 member Registration Board of designated professions (up to 12),

2 managers of public & private sectors, 1 nominated by Minister of Education & Science, 6 representing general public nominated by Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment, 3 nominated by Minister for Health

## Disciplinary Committee

- (a) a preliminary proceedings committee;
  - (b) a professional conduct committee;
  - (c) a health committee
- Majority PT's.

Physiotherapists  
Registration Board  
(PRB)  
Registrar – CEO  
6 Physiotherapists  
7 Lay members

Registration Board  
for each profession  
(14)

Council may establish committees to perform any of its functions or exercise any of its powers which in its opinion, may be better or more conveniently performed or exercised by a committee

# Regulation: Current situation

- PRB established in May 2014
- Minister for Health wrote to the PRB seeking its views with regard to the protection of the title Physical Therapist
- PRB responded to the Minister in February 2015
- Minister will hold formal consultations before making his decision in the coming months

# Opening of Physiotherapy Register

- If the issue of protection of both titles in one register is satisfactorily resolved, the register is scheduled to open by the end of 2015
- A 2 year grand parenting period then begins for those wishing to register.
- Fitness to Practise (FTP) will commence immediately for those registered

# Changes

- Accreditation
- Validation
- Fitness to Practise - will all transfer to the PRB when the Register opens.
- At the end of the grand parenting period only those registered will be allowed to use the protected title/s and practice

# Practice model

- Not defined by legislation
- Health care funded through a mix of
  - Public tax funded system
  - Personal out of pocket expenses
  - Private health insurance
- Delivered in both private & public settings
- Patient self-referral available in private practice and some public contexts
- Models of advanced practice developed in some areas

# Challenges

Lack of clarity on timeline for opening of PT Register

Protection of both titles in one Register

Political uncertainty

Financial Crisis



# Summary

- The ISCP has worked tirelessly for the protection of both titles in one register
- At present absolutely no clarity on how this matter will be resolved
- Public safety is not served unless both titles are protected in one register.