PUBLIC COMPLAINTS PROCESS

Information for the Public and the Process for filing a formal complaint.

A physical therapist assistant is a licensed health care professional who provides treatment according to a plan developed by and under the supervision of a licensed physical therapist.

In New York State, a physical therapist assistant has completed an approved accredited two-year college program with instruction to provide treatment under the supervision of a physical therapist. New York physical therapist assistants have passed a national written examination and met all criteria for licensure in New York State, including clinical experience.

How will I know if the physical therapy professional providing my care is licensed in New York?

The license of a physical therapy professional can be verified by through the Office of Professions’ website at www.op.nysed.gov. In addition you may verify to see if a physical therapist or physical therapist assistant has been charged with professional misconduct at the same website.

What do I do if I as a member of the general public have a complaint regarding a PTA student, from LaGuardia Community College?

A complaint against a PTA student from LaGuardia Community College should be reported to Dr. Debra Engel, Program Director of the Physical Therapist Assistant program. Dr. Engel can be reached at 718-482-5780 or by email at dengel@lagcc.cuny.edu. If the complaint is related to a student’s behavior in a clinical setting, the clinical supervisor at the facility should be contacted along with Dr. Jacqueline Ross, Academic Clinical Coordinator of Education in the Physical Therapist Assistant program. Dr. Ross can be reached at 718-482-5771 or by email at rossja@lagcc.cuny.edu to discuss your concerns and work to remediate the situation.

What do I do if I have a complaint against a student from LaGuardia Community College?

A complaint against a LaGuardia Community College student should be reported to the Office of the Vice President of Student Affairs by calling 718-482-5180. The public may also contact the Department of Public Safety at 1-718-482-5555 at which time the caller will be referred to the aforementioned office. The Student Judiciary Officer in the Office of the Vice President of Student Affairs will review the complaint. An advocate also may be assigned to the student as needed. After review of the complaint, the Office of the Vice President of Student Affairs responds in writing to those persons involved with options for remediation to all involved parties.
What do I do if I have a complaint against a PTA graduate?

Professional Misconduct and Discipline for Licensed Professionals (taken from the New York State Office of Professions website)

To ensure public protection in New York State, the New York State Education Department's Office of the Professions (OP) investigates and prosecutes professional misconduct in all professions except medicine. Professional misconduct is the failure of a licensed professional to meet expected standards of practice. Professional misconduct is defined in Education Law and in the Rules of the Board of Regents. Professional misconduct includes the following:

- Engaging in acts of gross incompetence or gross negligence on a single occasion, or negligence or incompetence on more than one occasion
- Permitting or aiding an unlicensed person to perform activities requiring a license
- Refusing a client or patient service because of race, creed, color, or national origin
- Practicing beyond the scope of the profession
- Releasing confidential information without authorization
- Being convicted of a crime
- Failing to return or provide copies of records on request
- Being sexually or physically abusive
- Abandoning or neglecting a patient in need of immediate care
- Performing unnecessary work or unauthorized services
- Practicing under the influence of alcohol or other drugs

A range of penalties that includes censure and reprimand, fines (up to $10,000 for each violation), suspensions and/or probationary terms may be imposed on licensees who have committed misconduct. The Board of Regents takes final action on the most serious cases of misconduct. In severe cases of misconduct, the Regents may revoke the professional's license. Information on uncontested determinations in which a licensee has been assessed a fine for committing an infraction of a minor and technical nature is available by phone: 518-474-3817, fax: 518-474-1449 or e-mail: op4info@mail.nysed.gov, or by writing to the Office of the Professions.