

Guidelines for Physical Therapy Services by Students under Medicare Part B

In a memorandum (AB-01-56) CMS stated that “services performed by a student are not reimbursed under Medicare Part B. Medicare pays for services of physicians and practitioners (e.g. licensed physical therapists) authorized by statute. Students do not meet the definition of practitioners listed in the statute.”

In a letter to the American Speech and Hearing Association, CMS further described circumstances, under which they consider the service as being essentially provided directly by the qualified practitioner, even though the student has some involvement. Such services would be billable. Specifically, CMS states:

“The qualified practitioner is recognized by the Medicare Part B beneficiary as the responsible professional within any session when services are delivered.

The qualified practitioner is present and in the room for the entire session. The student participates in the delivery of services when the qualified practitioner is directing the service, making the skilled judgement, and is responsible for the assessment and treatment.

The qualified practitioner is present in the room guiding the student in service delivery when the student is participating in the provision of services, and the practitioner is not engaged in treating another patient or doing other tasks at the same time.

The qualified practitioner is responsible for the services and as such, signs all documentation (A student may, of course, also sign but it is not necessary since the Part B payment is for the clinician’s services, not for the student’s services).”