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

Dr Sheelagh McNeill MISCP, SMISCP
Chartered Physiotherapist
29th April 2015
Irish Society of Chartered Physiotherapists (ISCP) is the sole professional body representing chartered physiotherapists in Ireland.
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
• 92/51/EEC 2nd 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
- **ISCN** 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

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

Registration Board for each profession (14)
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
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.