



OFFICES OF THE
ATTORNEY GENERAL OF MISSOURI
JEFFERSON CITY

JOHN C. DANFORTH
ATTORNEY GENERAL

October 15, 1975

OPINION LETTER NO. 181

Honorable E. Thomas Coleman
Representative, District 21
2919 NE Russell Road
Kansas City, Missouri 64117

Dear Representative Coleman:

This is in response to your request for an opinion from this office as follows:

"May a professional physical therapist licensed in Missouri perform electromyography testing?"

The practice of professional physical therapy is governed by Sections 334.500 to 334.620, RSMo.

Section 334.500, RSMo, provides in part as follows:

"'Professional physical therapy' means the specialized treatment of a human being by the use of exercise, massage, heat or cold, air, light, water, electricity, or sound, for the purpose of correcting or alleviating any physical or mental condition or preventing the development of any physical or mental disability, or the performance of tests of neuromuscular function as an aid to the diagnosis or treatment of any human condition, but does not include the use of surgery or obstetrics nor the administration, prescribing or dispensing of any drug or medicine, X-radiation, radioactive substance, diagnostic X-ray, electrocautery or electrosurgery."

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Section 334.590, RSMo, provides that the licensing board may refuse to grant a license or revoke or suspend a license for unprofessional or dishonorable conduct such as:

"Practicing or offering to practice professional physical therapy independent of the prescription and direction of a person licensed and registered in this state to practice medicine and surgery whose license is in good standing;"

You inquire whether a professional physical therapist may performed electromyography testing under provisions of this statute.

Dorland's Illustrated Medical Dictionary, 23rd Edition (1957), defines electromyography as follows:

"The recording of the changes in electric potential of muscle (1) by means of surface or needle electrodes to determine merely whether the muscle is contracting or not (useful in kinesiology) or (2) by insertion of a needle electrode into the muscle and observing by cathode ray oscilloscope and loud-speaker the action potentials spontaneously present in a muscle (abnormal) or induced by voluntary contractions, as a means of detecting the nature and location of motor unit lesions; or (3) recording the electrical activity evoked in a muscle by stimulation of its nerve (useful for study of several aspects of neuromuscular function, neuromuscular conduction, extent of nerve lesion, reflex responses, etc.). . . ."

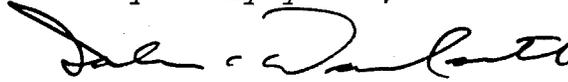
Section 334.500 expressly provides that a professional physical therapist may perform tests of neuromuscular function as an aid to the diagnosis or treatment of any human condition. According to the definition of electromyography, it is a recording of the electrical activity evoked in the muscle by stimulation of its nerves which is useful in the study of several aspects of neuromuscular function of the muscle.

It is our opinion that conducting an electromyography test, as above defined, is authorized under Section 334.500, RSMo, by a professional physical therapist, provided it is prescribed and performed under the direction of a person licensed and registered in this state

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to practice medicine and surgery. The tests may be performed only for the collection of data which is to be submitted to the physician who ordered the tests and the data is not to be interpreted by the physical therapist.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "John C. Danforth".

JOHN C. DANFORTH
Attorney General