Orthopedic Physician Extender – Certified OPE-C®

Standards of Practice

Elevating the Clinical Specialty in Orthopedics for the Athletic Trainer

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Legal Disclaimer

The National Board for Certification in the Orthopedic Specialties (NBCOS) - Orthopedic Physician Extender Certified (OPE-C®) Standards of Practice is intended to support and enhance the care of the orthopedic patient during the orthopedic physician-patient care experience. Information in this publication has been authored and peer-reviewed by subject matter experts in the field and reflects current evidence and research.

The rapid pace of innovation and constant change in health care is evident in the physician practice and operating room, urgent care facilities, emergency departments etc. where patient safety and outcomes are closely scrutinized. Changes in best practices are inevitable as current strategies are replaced by those with better results. Individual providers, teams, and facilities are accountable for using their own knowledge and expertise when determining the course of action in a patient care situation. NBCOS disclaims any and all liability or damages resulting to any individual for claims, which may arise from the use/application of skills detailed herein of any healthcare provider, whether these claims be asserted by a physician, other clinician/provider, or any other person.

The role of the OPE-C® in the orthopedic physician practice setting, as well as the aforementioned healthcare facilities are a dynamic and evolving role for the Athletic Trainer that is responsive to consumer and societal needs, to system changes, and to emerging knowledge and research. Although this document may be a resource to augment state statutes and regulations that govern the practice of Athletic Training, it does not supersede existing laws and other regulatory requirements. Athletic Trainers are required to abide by relevant statutes and regulations.

The orthopedic practice, hospital, urgent care and surgical centers should specify the privileges, role, responsibilities for each practitioner. Furthermore, the organization should establish qualifications, criteria, and credentialing process when granting specific privileges. Athletic Trainers who are additionally credentialed as OPE-C are required to abide by their relevant statutes and regulations for both state licensed and unlicensed certifications.
Orthopedic Physician Extender – Certified (OPE-C®)

Definition

An OPE-C® is a highly educated healthcare specialist who works directly under the orthopedic physician involved in the management of musculoskeletal conditions in a guided, supervised orthopedic and surgical setting.

The Orthopedic Physician Extender – Certified are recognized clinicians that have successfully challenged the National Board for Certification in the Orthopedic Specialties (NBCOS) Orthopedic Physician Extender certification examination. Those individuals possessing the OPE-C® credential complete continuing education units (CEUs) to maintain certification.

Standards of Practice

The orthopedic extender position for the athletic trainer continues to be a vast growth opportunity within the profession. In today’s economy, professionals are always seeking an opportunity to continue their marketability in the workforce, particularly the orthopedic setting. The educational background/preparation of the athletic trainer continues to afford the AT a seamless transition within clinical orthopedics. As such, previous data supports the considerable value the athletic trainer has on patient throughput, clinical outcomes and patient satisfaction, as well as, the marked economic impact athletic trainers have in the orthopedic setting.

Successful completion of the OPE credentialing exam will indicate the knowledge and skills in the following competency areas within orthopedic practice:

- Orthopedic Examination and Clinical Diagnosis
- Diagnostic Imaging & Intervention Strategies
- Casting, Splinting and Orthotic Devices/Modalities Application
- Surgical Considerations
- HealthCare Administration & Leadership in Clinical Practice

Knowledge, Skills and Clinical Abilities

**DOMAIN I: Orthopaedic Examination and Clinical Diagnosis**

1. Obtain a complete, problem oriented history that may lead to the corresponding clinical differentials involving the extremities and spine.

2. Perform a thorough physical examination of the musculoskeletal system with particular emphasis on the importance of an interdisciplinary approach.

3. Recognize and describe etiology, pathology, signs and symptoms, and management procedures for specific injuries relating to the extremities and spine.

4. Demonstrate the ability to identify anatomical structures relating to specific injuries relating to the extremities and spine.
5. Describe and demonstrate range of motion measurement and common special tests used to evaluate specific injuries relating to the extremities and spine.

6. Interpret the findings from a systematic evaluation of specific injuries relating to the extremities and spine.

7. Demonstrate knowledge and comprehension of the orthopedic conditions that are associated with physical examination process of the extremities and spine.

8. Describe and demonstrate criteria for return to physical activity, following an injury to the extremities and spine in consultation with the orthopedic physician.

9. Integrate evidence-based medicine and new diagnostic or therapeutic strategies into patient care within orthopedic clinical practice.

**DOMAIN II: Casting, Splinting and Orthotic Device Application**

1. Identify and explain specific fracture pattern/pathologies and demonstrate competency in proper management.

2. Demonstrate appropriate fracture management and identify the fundamental goals relative to patient care/safety.

3. Identify and demonstrate the essential components of patient preparation and application of synthetic casting materials.

4. Identify and explain the indications, contraindications and possible complications associated with orthopedic casting and bracing.

5. Select and explain the appropriate uses of various prophylactic resources utilized in orthopedic casting and bracing.

6. Apply and remove select upper and lower extremity orthopedic casting techniques in compliance with physician’s orders.

7. Demonstrate the appropriate position for fracture healing and describe the associated systemic factors and local variables affecting bone growth and repair.

8. Demonstrate proper application of selected upper and lower extremity orthopedic splinting techniques in compliance with physician’s orders.

9. Demonstrate an understanding of the relevant orthopedic anatomy as it relates to the clinical indications for utilizing various types of prefabricated orthoses.

10. Identify and demonstrate the essential components of patient preparation and application of designated orthotic devices.

11. Demonstrate the ability to properly fit, apply, remove, and care for common spinal and extremity orthoses, in compliance with physician’s orders.

12. Identify and explain the indications, contraindications and possible complications associated in the application of select orthopedic orthotic devices.
13. Explain proper care and instruction to patient(s) regarding common spinal and extremity orthoses.

14. Identify HIPAA regulations with demonstrated compliance in an effort to provide quality patient care based on order/prescription received from a supervising physician.

15. Demonstrate the ability to select and utilize the appropriate diagnosis codes and insurance billing procedure for reimbursement purposes.

**DOMAIN III: Diagnostic Imaging & Intervention Strategies**

1. Recognize normal and abnormal anatomic structures and their appearance in routine diagnostic imaging studies, including but limited to plain film radiography, magnetic resonance imaging, bone scans, MSK ultrasound and computed tomography.

2. Incorporate a systematic approach in the diagnostic imaging review process that aligns with evidence-based criteria for clinical decision-making.

3. Synthesize the best evidence surrounding musculoskeletal imaging when devising a clinical plan to effectively management the disposition of the orthopedic patient.

4. Identify and discuss the various imaging modalities available along with the particular indications/contraindications/precautions respective to each orthopedic case pathology.

5. Identify and interpret the musculoskeletal imaging features specific to various orthopedic injuries related to the spine and extremities.

6. Integrate professional nomenclature to effectively communicate to the patient on clinical imaging findings and their related disease process.

7. Demonstrate an understanding and appreciation of evidence-based practices in diagnostic imagining when assessing orthopedic related injury.

8. Identify proper set up involving tools/equipment (syringe, needles, medication etc.) in preparation for joint aspiration or injection; along with a demonstrated understanding of the underlying anatomy shoulder, elbow, wrist, knee and ankle, respectively.

9. Recognize the indications/contraindication/precautions for joint aspiration and injection techniques.

**DOMAIN IV: Surgical Considerations**

1. Perform proper sterility aseptic techniques by using acceptable procedures for scrubbing, gowing, and gloving in preparation for an invasive orthopedic procedure.

2. Conduct perioperative techniques to assist the surgeon with patient management before, during and after an orthopedic surgical procedures.

3. Assist with patient preparation for surgery in accordance with acceptable standards for patient position, prep and draping.

4. Perform as first or second assist in the surgical environment by incorporating acceptable practices and techniques.
5. Demonstrate competency with instrument handling, basic biopsy and excision techniques, suturing methods and the application of adhesives under proper supervision.

6. Incorporate accepted protocols and techniques in conjunction with all aspects of pre-/intra-/post-operative patient management and surgical technique practices while under the direction of the supervising physician.

7. Demonstrate patient safety considerations within the operating room environment to include but not limited to time out requirements.

8. Demonstrate the ongoing commitment to orthopedic clinical practice by maintaining medical knowledge and patient care skills necessary to assist the orthopedist in the surgical setting.

9. Adhere to all facility regulations, policy mandates and ethical guidelines related to the surgical setting.

**DOMAIN V: HealthCare Administration & Leadership in Clinical Practice**

1. Demonstrate the ability to maintain confidential management of patient protected health information.

2. Demonstrate an understanding of Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) regulations and guidelines, including universal precautions for the prevention, exposure and control of infectious diseases in the orthopedic physician practice and surgical settings.

3. Utilize documentation strategies to effectively communicate with patients and other medical personnel while complying with statues that regulate privacy.

4. Recognize provisions for HIPAA awareness, including the Privacy and Security Rules, the HITECH Act, Breach Notification and the Omnibus Final Ruling mandates.

5. Appreciate the ethical, managerial, and leadership challenges/changes that exist in a dynamic orthopedic practice setting.

6. Demonstrate initiative in the needs of patients and professional staff, showing honesty, compassion, and respect for the patient issues both in terms of the eventual medical diagnosis and the psychosocial ramifications

7. Illustrate a commitment towards professional responsibilities, adherence to ethical principles and sensitivity to diversity in matters with orthopedic patient problem.

**Orthopedic Physician Extender Examination - Credentialing**

The Orthopedic Physician Extender examination is a 125 question online, objective assessment comprised of the knowledge and skills genuinely representative of the athletic trainer in the orthopedic setting. The OPE-C will provide the marked designation needed to fully describe the practice credential possessed by the athletic trainer in the orthopedic setting.