

ALABAMA STATE BOARD OF MEDICAL EXAMINERS
Larry D. Dixon, Executive Director

August 11, 1999

Dear :

This will acknowledge receipt of your letter of July 29, 1999 concerning EMG testing being performed in Alabama by physical therapists. For your information, the State Board of Medical Examiners, in September 1989, adopted a policy on EMG testing that stated that both the performance and interpretation of EMG's should be done by a physician and not a technician, whether in a hospital or office setting. This policy was announced in the Board of Medical Examiners' quarterly newsletter in the Fall of 1990. The Board of Medical Examiners later learned that the Alabama Board of Physical Therapy had issued a declaratory ruling in June of 1989 which stated that EMG/NCV testing is within the scope of practice of physical therapy in Alabama.

The State Board of Medical Examiners has not modified or withdrawn its 1989 opinion. However, in this state the health professions are regulated by autonomous licensing boards, each with the authority to interpret its own practice act. The State Board of Medical Examiners does not have jurisdiction or authority over the Alabama Board of Physical Therapy. There is no mechanism for resolving the conflicting opinions of the two state regulatory boards, short of litigation. It is my understanding that EMG testing is being taught to physical therapists at the University of Alabama and that neurologists are involved in this training. It is my further understanding that many physicians in this state routinely refer patients to physical therapists for EMG testing. While the Board of Medical Examiners understands that many neurologists in this state feel that EMG testing should only be performed by qualified licensed physicians, this issue is not without controversy, even among physicians.

I hope that you will find this information responsive to your concerns.

Sincerely,
Alabama Board of Medical Examiners

/s/ Larry D. Dixon

Larry D. Dixon

LDD/mlm