

28 February 2022

Ms Gerty Lund
President
Norsk Fysioterapiforbund
Kirkegata 15
0153 Oslo Norway

Dear Gerty

Re: Regulation of the physiotherapy profession in Norway

We are writing to express our strong solidarity and support for rejecting the proposal to extend the Health Personnel Act's authorisation scheme to 'manual therapists' in Norway.

World Physiotherapy formerly known as the (World Confederation for Physical Therapy) is the sole international organisation for physiotherapy, representing more than 685,000 physiotherapists worldwide through its 125 member organisations. World Physiotherapy was founded in 1951 and since 1956, it has been a non-governmental organisation (NGO) in official relations with the World Health Organization.

World Physiotherapy is committed to moving physiotherapy forward and to promoting the significant role the profession plays globally in improving health and wellbeing. World Physiotherapy encourages high standards of physiotherapy research, education, and practice.

Norsk Fysioterapiforbund (NFF) was established in 1936 and was a founding member of World Physiotherapy. Over the course of the past 70 years World Physiotherapy has continually recognised NFF as global leader and the sole authoritative voice for the physiotherapy profession in Norway.

As a member organisation of World Physiotherapy, Norsk Fysioterapiforbund has the responsibility to establish standards for the education of physiotherapists and standards of practice for physiotherapists in Norway. It is the role of NFF to ensure that processes are in place to implement and monitor education and practice standards and to ensure that those wishing to practise physiotherapy in Norway meet the global standard.

World Physiotherapy has several special interest subgroups including the International Federation of Orthopaedic Manipulative Physical Therapists (IFOMPT). Countries are required to meet internationally agreed educational standards to which all post graduate programmes are assessed and must achieve in order to become a member. This aims to promote and maintain the high standards of specialist education and clinical practice in manual/musculoskeletal physiotherapists.

Norsk Fysioterapiforbund (NFF) Manual Therapy Interest Group (FFMT) is a member of IFOMPT and within the global musculoskeletal physiotherapy community is considered the leader of the profession in Norway.

Musculoskeletal physiotherapy is a core foundation of physiotherapy practice. All physiotherapists are trained to a high level to assess and treat musculoskeletal conditions as part of their entry to practice qualification. The development of higher-level skills beyond those at entry level, in areas of physiotherapy practice such as manual/musculoskeletal therapy do not create a new profession but are simply advancements in professional knowledge and competency of the physiotherapy profession.

Formal recognition of physiotherapists with additional qualifications and experience has the potential to provide increased benefits to the health and wellbeing of patients/clients, to reduce health system costs, and to encourage the retention and motivation of senior highly qualified members of the profession.

A number of World Physiotherapy member organisations have specialist certification programmes to provide formal recognition for physiotherapists with advanced clinical knowledge, experience, and skills in a special area of practice and to assist consumers and the health care community in identifying these physiotherapists.

The programmes do not create a new profession but recognise higher levels of attainment within the physiotherapy profession across a range of areas. Any proposal to classify physiotherapists who have additional further qualifications as a new profession is counter to international policy and practice and should be rejected.

No other country in the world has implemented a professional pathway through physiotherapy to create a new profession. Any initiative in this regard will further isolate Norwegian 'manual therapists' from a global community of physiotherapist and prevent workforce mobility, innovation and research collaboration.

World Physiotherapy is supportive of any initiative that will empower the physiotherapists Norway to cope with the challenges of the health sector locally, regionally, and internationally. Norway's contribution to the global physiotherapy community will be stronger if the profession is supported to evolve and incorporate advanced practice within the profession not outside of it.

Yours sincerely



Emma K. Stokes

President

World Physiotherapy



Laura Finucane

President

International Federation of Orthopaedic

Manipulative Physical Therapists