

Strategies to Get You To & Through Certification in Oncologic Physical Therapist Exam

Nicole L. Stout DPT, FAPTA, Chair of Specialty Council on Oncologic Physical Therapy,
Amy Litterini, PT, DPT, Specialty Council on Oncologic Physical Therapy, and
Lucinda (Cindy) Pfalzer, PT, PhD, FAPTA, Fellow in the American College of Sports
Medicine (FACSM), Specialty Council on Oncologic Physical Therapy



1

Introduction & Background (Nicole 10 minutes) Schedule: One hour session

- Intro and Learning Objectives (10 minutes)
 - Overview of ABPTS (Vision & Mission)
 - Benefits of Specialization
- Examination/Certification Process (15 minutes)
- Description of Specialist Practice (15 minutes)
 - Exam Content
 - Study Strategies
- Small Group Work (15 minutes)
- Q & A (10 minutes)

2

Course/Session Learning Objectives

Participants will:

- be able to accurately describe the application process and scope of the board certification oncologic physical therapy (PT) clinical specialization exam.
- recognize the benefits of board certification in oncologic physical therapy and the potential career opportunities it may provide.
- acquire a network of colleagues interested in pursuing board certification in oncologic PT clinical specialization.
- be able to develop a plan for study with available resources.

3

Introduction & Background

- Oncologic PT is the newest ABPTS certification having been approved by the APTA House of Delegates in June of 2016.
- Oncologic Clinical Specialist Board Certification provides a new opportunity for professional advancement through recognition, increased knowledge through study, and leverage in the practice and education arenas.
- This interactive session will provide information about:
 - Exam content based on the Description of Specialty Practice (DSP)
 - Strategies for preparation
 - Opportunities to identify study partners

4

American Board of Physical Therapy Specialties (ABPTS)

Coordinates and oversees the specialist certification process,
Is the governing body for certification and recertification of
clinical specialists.

This **board** is composed of 11 individuals:

- Board-certified PTs from the 8 different board certification specialty areas;
- 1 PT member of the APTA Board of Directors;
- 1 individual with expertise in test development, evaluation, and education; and
- 1 non - PT representing the public.

5

American Board of Physical Therapy Specialties

Vision Statement

The ABPTS will create, promote, and sustain a culture in which
the highest quality PT is provided by therapists who attain and
maintain certification in a specialty area.

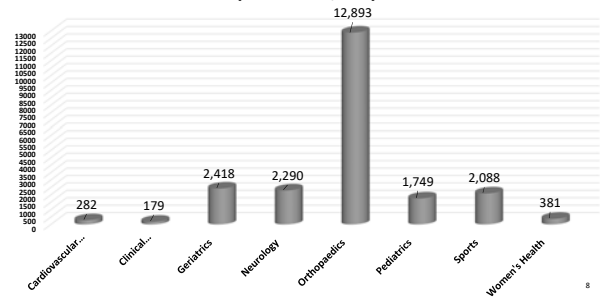
6

ABPTS' Responsibilities

- Development of *minimum requirements* for certification and recertification to be used across all specialty areas, and *approval of specialty-specific requirements* developed by specialty councils.
- Approval and recommendation to the APTA House of Delegates of the formation of proposed specialty areas.
- Approval of formation of specialty councils in areas approved by the House of Delegates.
- Approval and oversight of specialty council activities.
- Approval of certification and recertification of qualified candidates for specialist certification.

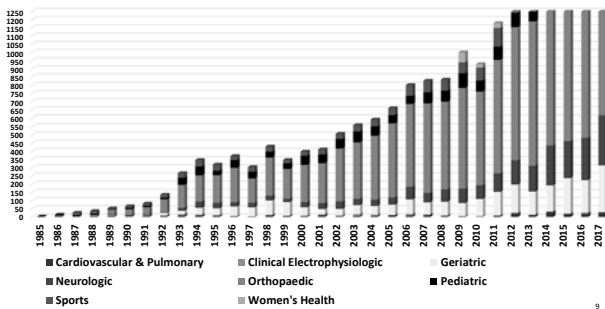
7

Number of Clinical Specialists From 1985 to 2017 (Total = 22,280)



8

Clinical Specialists By Year from 1985 to 2017



9

Benefits of Certification

- Increase clinical knowledge
- Enhance marketing/recruiting patients/referral sources
- Gain professional advancement opportunities
- Expand opportunities for leadership locally and nationally
- Set yourself apart from others in the specialty
- Enhance your professional network

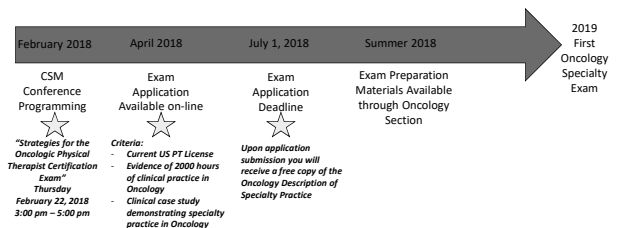
10

Specialist Certification: Oncology

- **Applicant Resources**
- [Description of Specialty Practice: Oncology](#)
- [Specialist Certification Examination Outline: Oncology](#)
- [What Activities Constitute Direct Patient Care? \(.ppt\)](#)
- [Presentation: Enhancing Professional Development Through Certification](#)
- **Governance**
- [Oncology Specialty Council](#)

11

The Pathway to Oncology Specialization



Oncology Specialty Council

Specialty Council on Oncologic Physical Therapy



American Board of Physical Therapy Specialties

- Develop minimum eligibility requirements for certification and recertification based on ABPTS guidelines
- Screen applicants for exam eligibility and for recertification
- Develop the examination in consultation with the ABPTS testing agency and approved consultants.



2017 Roster

Nicole Stout, PT, DPT, CLT-LANA, Chair
Sarasota, FL, Term Expires: 12/20 nistout90@gmail.com

Lucinda Pfalzer, PT, PhD, FAPTA, Item Review Coordinator, Fenton, MI
Term Expires: 12/20 cpfalzer@umflint.edu



Amy Litterini, PT, DPT, MOSC Council Liaison
Portland, ME, Term Expires: 12/20 alitterini@une.edu

Charles McGarvey, PT, DPT, FAPTA
Rockville, MD, Term Expires: 12/20 clmconsulting@verizon.net



13

Eligibility Requirements

14

Minimum Criteria

- Current licensure to practice PT in the USA, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, or the US Virgin Islands
- 2000 hours of **direct patient care** within the specialty in the past 10 years
- 25% of those hours must have occurred in the last 3 years

15

What Activities Constitute Direct Patient Care?

- Because each situation is different, there is no specific list of activities that may always be included or excluded as direct patient care.
- A guiding principle to consider for defining direct patient care is: the activities that a PT participates in, that have a direct influence on the care of a specific patient or client. This work can be fee based or pro bono work.
- Please note that eligible direct patient care hours only include the time spent practicing within your specific specialty area, and as a licensed PT in the USA or any of its possessions or territories.

16

Examples of Direct Patient Care:

- Team meetings where the needs of one or more specific patients are discussed and evaluated, regardless of whether or not the patient and family are present.
- Your consultation services if your evaluation and input directly impact a specific patient.
- Time utilized to prepare home exercise programs for specific patients.
- Time spent reviewing medical records prior to seeing a specific patient or patients.
- For senior therapists or heads of departments, time spent reviewing the physical therapy documentation in the records of all of the patients in his/her unit. However, these hours can only be utilized once and cannot also be used for other categories such as administration.

17

Examples of Direct Patient Care:

- Time spent teaching a family how to help or care for a specific patient through a home exercise program.
- Screening of individual participants in a community senior center for risk of falls.
- Screening of new clients of a fitness center in order to prevent injury once they start exercising.
- Involvement in a research project where patients are directly influenced or affected by your interaction. This interaction can be on a one-on-one basis or in a group setting, as long as the care of the patient or patients are directly influenced or affected by your interaction. These hours can only be utilized once and cannot also be used to calculate research activities points.

18

Examples of Direct Patient Care:

- If you teach a course that involves working with a group of students to evaluate and treat a specific patient or patients, the time spent in this activity that has a direct influence on a specific person counts towards your direct patient care hours. However, please remember that these hours could also count as clinical supervision but cannot be allocated to both categories in the Professional Development Portfolio.
- Time spent providing feedback on a written case from one of your students that is on a clinical affiliation, for a patient the student is currently treating. This feedback should be discussed with their clinical instructor and changes implemented as needed.
- Time spent providing acute care and injury management for athletes in venues where athletes practice and compete

19

Option A

- Complete the **online** application to document you meet the requirements to sit for the examination including the **Minimum Eligibility Criteria**.
- Submit a Case Reflection demonstrating specialty practice in oncologic PT

20

In the Future: Residency

- Oncologic PT Residencies are being developed – go to the American Board of Physical Therapy Residency and Fellowship Education (ABPTRFE) website to learn more about residency programs <http://www.abptrfe.org/home.aspx> and for a listing of accredited residencies, candidate programs, or developing programs go to: <http://www.abptrfe.org/apta/abptrfe/Directory.aspx?navID=10737432672>.
 - ABPTRFE is the accrediting body for the APTA for post-professional residency and fellowship programs in PT.
 - You may apply while enrolled in your residency, but must complete the program at least 1 month prior to the exam window

OPTION B:

- Successful completion of APTA-accredited post professional Oncology PT clinical residency in past 10 years
- Submit Case Reflection demonstrating specialty practice in oncologic PT

21

Case Reflection

PURPOSE:

- The purpose of the patient case reflection is to demonstrate the advanced clinical reasoning and decision making reflective of that of an oncologic clinical specialist.
- Clinical specialists have the ability to synthesize information from a variety of sources including, but not limited to, the patient/client, examination, differential diagnosis, intervention, and the incorporation of literature into clinical practice.
- Clinical specialists are able to incorporate what is learned from each patient case, positive or negative, into future patient management.
- The case reflection demonstrates learning experiences by providing rationale for decision making throughout the plan of care.
- Relevant citations of the literature should be included in the case reflection.

22

Applying for the Exam

23

Applying for the Exam: Online Application

- ONLY **Online** applications are accepted (Available late April, 2018)
- The online application system is accessible through: <http://aptaapps.apta.org/SpecialistCertification/MySpecialties.aspx>
- All applicants must describe their PT practice experience for each position and facility within the online application forms.
- Applicants must also chart their experience by year to ensure that they meet recent requirements.
- Applicants must document the number of **direct patient care** hours in the specialty.
- Up to 6 weeks required to process initial certification application submissions

24

Applying for the Exam Important dates:

- Late April – Application site opens
- July 1 – Application deadline
- August 31 – Reapplication deadline
- November 30 – Initial Certification Exam Fee due
- February-March – Test dates (TBD for 2019)

25

Specialist Certification Fees



	APTA Member	Non-Member
Application Review	\$515	\$860
Examination	\$800	\$1,525
Total	\$1,315	\$2,385

Board Certification is valid for 10 years



26

Reapplying for the Exam

- If the exam is not passed the first take, or one defers taking the exam, one may retake the exam the following year.
 - Reapplication form submitted online with updated candidate information
 - At the time of their reapplication, repeat candidates must meet the clinical practice requirements for the current examination administration.
 - Reapplication Review Fee: \$160

27

Applying for a Second Area of Certification

- Applicants must submit a complete set of application materials and fees for each specialist certification exam.
- ABPTS policy **does not permit** an applicant who applies for certification in a 2nd specialty area **to submit the same direct patient hours for more than one specialty area.**
- Specialty councils will review previously submitted applications for duplication of hours.
- ABPTS and specialty councils do not recommend that applicants apply in more than 1 specialty area during the same year.

28

Examination Candidate Guide

- Examination candidate guide may be downloaded at no cost from APTA's Specialist Certification Program Website: (<http://www.abpts.org/CandidateGuides/?navID=10737435528>)
- Select the Oncology Candidate Guide from the drop down specialist certification menu options.
- For any additional questions or requests, you may contact: <http://aptaapps.apta.org/SpecialistCertification/MySpecialties.aspx>

29

After Submitting Your Application

- DSP and *Self-Assessment Tools for PTs* from ABPTS are sent to you
- *Self-Assessment Tools for PTs* is designed to help individuals evaluate their current level of knowledge and skills in the specialty area against a set of nationally accepted advanced clinical competencies.
- Upon completing the competency ratings, PTs can begin to develop a professional development plan to increase knowledge and skills in practice in the specialty area.
- Plan might include continuing education courses, college/university courses, mentoring, or clinical residency.

30

Exam Format & Content Outline

Use DSP as Guide

31

Description of Specialty Practice (DSP)

- Describes the advanced knowledge, skills, and abilities for clinical practice in a specialty area
- Based on the results of an extensive practice analysis
 - Conducted by Specialty Councils and approved by ABPTS
- Guides the development of the certification exam



ABPTS 32

Description of Specialist Practice: Oncology

Oncologic

Physical Therapy
Description of Specialty Practice

- All questions on the exam relate to the competencies outlined in the book *Oncologic PT: Description of Specialty Practice (DSP)*. Refer to the exam content outline included in the application and the DSP book for detailed information on the exam.
- Examination will comprise approximately 200 questions.
- Questions may include graphics.
- Examination questions can represent both a practice expectation and a knowledge area associated with that expectation.

33

Examination Design & Administration

- Developed by the Specialty Councils, in collaboration with the National Board of Medical Examiners®
- A rigorous, criterion referenced exam that tests the application and synthesis of advanced knowledge and clinical skills & reasoning
- Administered once yearly over a two-week period
- Computerized exams, administered at Prometric test centers **worldwide**
- Multiple choice questions including case scenarios, videos, and pictures



ABPTS 34

Exam Format and Length

- Approximately 200 items
- Examination is composed of objective multiple-choice questions that either stand-alone or are part of a series that relates to a case study.
- Candidates are given 7 hours to complete the specialist certification examination.
- Examination is administered in 4, 1 1/2 hour sections, with an optional break after any section (up to 50 minutes).

35

Where to Take the Examination

- Examinations are administered at Prometric Testing Centers throughout the U.S. and abroad
 - 2019 examination dates to be determined
 - www.prometric.com
- Contact the Specialist Certification Program at 1-800/999-2782, ext. 8520 for additional information about sitting for the specialist certification examination in an international location.

36

Exam Content Outline (Chapter 4 of DSP)

Examination Content Domain	% of Exam
I. Knowledge Areas Total	15%
A. Foundation sciences	5%
B. Clinical sciences	5%
C. Behavioral sciences	5%

http://www.abpts.org/Specialist_Certification/Oncology/Specialist_Certification_Examination_Outline_Oncology/

37

Examination Content Domain	% of Exam
II. Professional roles, responsibilities, and values Total	16%
A. Professional behavior	2%
B. Professional development	2%
C. Communication	2%
D. Social responsibility	2%
E. Leadership	2%
F. Education	1%
G. Advocacy	1%
H. Administration	1%
I. Consultation	1%
J. Evidence-based practice	2%

http://www.abpts.org/Specialist_Certification/Oncology/Specialist_Certification_Examination_Outline_Oncology/

38

Examination Content Domain	% of Exam
III. Patient and client management expectations Total	69%
A. Examination	23%
B. Reexamination	
C. Evaluation	14%
D. Diagnosis	
E. Prognosis	
F. Intervention/instruction	27%
G. Outcomes Assessment	5%
EXAM TOTAL	100%

http://www.abpts.org/Specialist_Certification/Oncology/Specialist_Certification_Examination_Outline_Oncology/

39

Medical Conditions

- Following list represents conditions that could be represented on the specialty exam.
- List is meant to be a guide and is not comprehensive.

Types of Cancer

– Breast	– Bladder	– Soft-tissue sarcoma
– Prostate	– Testicular	– Central nervous system
– Lung	– Pancreatic	– Brain
– Colorectal	– Leukemia	– Kidney
– Ovarian	– Lymphoma	– Stomach
– Melanoma	– Multiple myeloma	– Head and neck
– Cervical	– Osteosarcoma	– Thyroid
– Uterine		– Paraneoplastic syndromes

40

Further, it is expected that consideration is given not only to the medical diagnosis of cancer, but also to the side effects and late effects of the treatments rendered to manage the disease, including but not limited to chemotherapy, radiation therapy, and surgery.

• Musculoskeletal

- Bone metastasis
- Hormonal deprivation induced osteoporosis
- Pelvic pain, hypertonus, vaginal fibrosis
- Weakness
- Postural deviations from radiation-related tissue contracture
- Loss of ROM
- Cording/axillary web syndrome
- Steroid myopathy

• Neurological

- Nerve palsies (facial, spinal accessory, long thoracic)
- Brachial plexopathies (radiation induced vs metastatic)
- Lumbosacral plexopathies
- Peripheral neuropathies
- Balance dysfunction
- Chemotherapeutic neurotoxicities
- Falls
- Gait abnormalities
- Spinal cord compression
- Brain and CNS metastasis

41

• Integumentary

- Radiation fibrosis
- Phlebototoxicity
- Radiotherapy toxicities
- Skin extrusion
- Infection

• Cardiovascular and Pulmonary

- Deconditioning
- Cancer-related fatigue
- Lymphedema
- Chemotherapeutic cardiotoxicities

- Interstitial pulmonary fibrosis
- Cachexia
- Vena cava syndrome
- Pulmonary metastasis

• Immunosuppressive

- Graft vs Host disease
- Scleroderma
- Thrombocytopenia
- Neutropenia
- Anemia

• End of Life

42

Example of Detailed Content Outline in Chapter 2 of DSP

Foundational Sciences

- Anatomy
- Physiology
- Cancer biology
- Cancer pathophysiology
- Cellular biology (e.g. changes associated with cancer treatment and cancer disease)
- Neurophysiology
- Radiation physics

Clinical Sciences

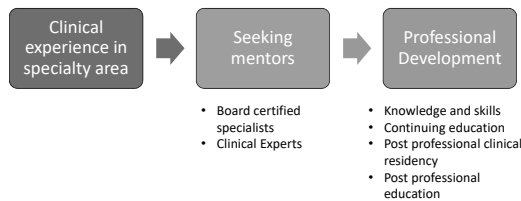
- Pharmacology (e.g. chemo pharmacokinetics, pain meds, hormonal agents)
- Kinesiology
- Pathokinesiology (e.g. altered jt mechanics after XRT tissue changes)
- Exercise physiology (e.g. consideration for immunosuppressed conditions, altered hemodynamics, safety, consideration of cancer side effects, adaptation of exercise interventions for safety)
- Taxonomy of cancer rehab principles (e.g. prevent, restore, support, palliate)
- Cancer tumor staging (using AJCC TNM classification)
- Tumor pathology
- Genetics and genomics (oncologic specific)
- Cancer control science and epidemiology (e.g. prevention, screening, risk factor identification)
- Surgical oncology (e.g. reconstructive surgeries)
- Medical oncology (e.g. chemotherapeutic toxicities, hormonal agents, biological agents, targeted agents)
- Radiation oncology
- Laboratory tests (e.g. bld counts specific to neutropenia and thrombocytopenia, inflammatory markers, tumor assays, hormone receptor status)
- Diagnostic imaging (e.g. cardiac, bone density, CT, MRI, PET scanning as used in metastatic workups)

Getting Started

Path towards Clinical Specialization

44

Path towards Clinical Specialization



45

Professional Development Opportunities

- Oncology Section (soon to be *Academy of Oncologic PT*)
 - CSM Pre-Con Courses, CSM Conference offerings (<http://oncologypt.org/events/csm/2017/index.cfm>)
 - Regional courses (<http://oncologypt.org/events/regional-courses/oncology-physical-therapy-courses.cfm>) and
 - Certificates of Achievement in Oncology PT (CAOPT) (<http://oncologypt.org/events/caopt/index.cfm>)
 - Section Journal – Rehabilitation Oncology (<http://journals.lww.com/rehabonc/pages/default.aspx>)
 - EDGE Task Force Systematic Reviews
 - CPG on Diagnosis of Upper Quadrant Secondary Lymphedema
- APTA Journal – Physical Therapy (<https://academic.oup.com/ptj>)
- Professional Development Opportunities at APTA Learning Center (<http://learningcenter.apta.org/>)
- National and regional oncology conferences
 - ASCO, ASTRO, State Affiliates/Consortia, ACRM, NCCN

46

Study Strategies

- Consider your learning style
 - Auditory, kinesthetic, visual
- Partner with study buddies
 - Set your terms, make sure you are a match!
- Create
 - Chapter summaries
 - Article summaries/discussions
 - Index cards
- Consider quizlet.com or studystack.com
- Try sample quizzes
- Schedule regular time
- Pace yourself, map your plan

47

Areas of Expertise - Primary Practice Areas Where are you an expert?

- Acute and late effects of Cancer treatment
 - Cancer related pain
 - Cancer related fatigue
 - CIPN
 - Limited mobility/Balance impairments and falls
- Breast Cancer/Upper limb impairments and functional limitations
- Urolyn Cancer and lower GI cancers/Pelvic Floor Dysfunction/lower limb impairments and functional limitations
- Lymphedema
- Head and Neck Cancer/ Upper limb impairments and functional limitations
- Menopause/Osteoporosis
- Cachexia and Sarcopenia
- Pediatric oncology
- Hospice and palliative care/End of Life

48

Marketing Materials for Certified Specialists
<http://www.abpts.org/ForSpecialists/Marketing/>

Certified specialists can use the following materials in their marketing efforts

- [How to Promote Your Board-Certification Specialization](#)
- [Tips for Promoting Specialist Certification \(.pdf\)](#)
- [Impact of Specialist Certification on Physical Therapists](#)
- [ABPTS Logo Policy Form \(.doc\)](#)
- [Employers' View of Specialist Certification](#)
- [ABPTS Certified Specialists Statistics](#)
- [ABPTS Personalized Certificate Frames & Gift Collection](#)

Last Updated: 8/18/2016 Contact: spec-cert@apta.org

50

Thinking Ahead: After Board Certification

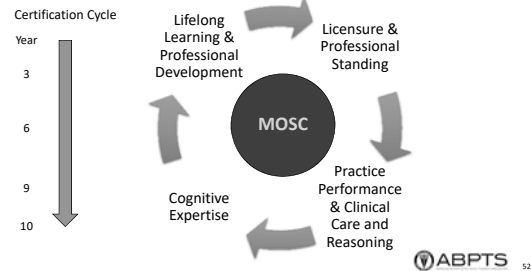
Maintenance of Specialist Certification (MOSC)

Purpose of MOSC Process

- Effectively verify current competence as an advanced practitioner in the specialty area
- Effectively evaluate professional development and clinical experience
- To encourage ongoing education and professional growth
- To keep pace with the rapidly expanding specialty knowledge base and scientific evidence that guides our clinical decision making
- To promote improved health outcomes related to PT specialty services

51

Maintenance of Specialist Certification (MOSC)



ABPTS 52

Minimum Eligibility Requirements of MOSC

1. Professional Standing and Direct Patient Care Hours
 - Licensure and 200 hours each three-year period
2. Commitment to Life Long Learning through Professional Development
 - Minimum of 10 MOSC "credits" documented in an e-portfolio per three-year period (30 total)
3. Practice Performance through Examples of Clinical Care and Clinical Reasoning
 - Reflective portfolio submitted and screened each period
4. Cognitive Expertise through Examination
 - 100 item exam every 10 years (two attempts)

53

Small Group Work

- Self- Assessment from ABPTS and DSP sent to you when you apply for the examination.



54

Q & A

Take Home Message: Prepare!



55

Oncology Specialty Council Members

Nicole L. Stout DPT, CLT-LANA, FAPTA
Chair
nlstout90@gmail.com

Lucinda Pfalzer, PT, PhD, FAPTA
Item Review Coordinator
lpfalzer@umflint.edu

Amy Litterini PT, DPT
MOSC Council Liaison
alitterini@une.edu

Charles McGarvey PT, DPT, FAPTA
Member-at-Large
CLM8890@gmail.com

Get Involved With Us

Become an Item Writer*

Applications will be available in April of 2018 for new item writers.

Attend a 1-day regional item writing workshop

- Learn more about writing test questions.
- Chicago, IL – April 28, 2018 Northwestern University
 - Boston, MA – Summer 2018
 - San Francisco, CA – Fall 2018

Volunteer to be a case reviewer

Seeking volunteers for Summer of 2018 to review case reflections for exam applicants. Email alitterini@une.edu

More Information is Available and Applications Can Be Accessed at

the ABPTS website:

<http://www.abpts.org/Certification/Oncology/>

56

*Item writers are NOT excluded from taking the exam for the initial exam cycles

For more information contact:



APTA

Postprofessional Certification and Credentialing

1111 North Fairfax Street

Alexandria, VA 22314

800/999-2782, ext 8520

www.abpts.org



57

References

- ABPTS Mission and Responsibilities, ABPTS webpage accessed September 22, 2017, <http://www.abpts.org/About/Mission/>
- ABPTS Certified Specialists Statistics. ABPTS webpage accessed September 22, 2017, <http://www.abpts.org/About/Statistics/>
- Specialist Certification, ABPTS webpage accessed September 22, 2017, <http://www.abpts.org/Certification/>
- Specialist Certification: Oncology, ABPTS webpage accessed September 22, 2017, <http://www.abpts.org/Certification/Oncology/>
- ABPTS Oncologic PT DSP 2017. http://www.abpts.org/Specialist_Certification/Oncology/Specialist_Certification_Examination_Outline_Oncology/
- AMERICAN BOARD OF PHYSICAL THERAPY SPECIALITIES: About Specialist Certification. Enhancing Professional Development through Certification Ppt. Accessed January 3, 2018, <http://www.abpts.org/Certification/About/>

58