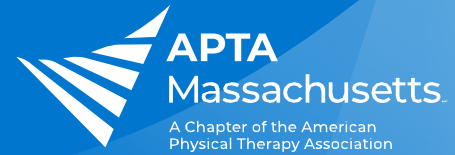


The Massachusetts Legislative Cycle

How does it work and where do I fit?



The Massachusetts Legislature operates on a two-year cycle, with formal sessions running from January of the odd year through July of the even year. Each session follows a predictable rhythm, allowing opportunities for advocacy, collaboration, and influence at key points along the way.

The Legislative Cycle

January (Odd Year)

- The legislative session begins.
- Legislators file new bills by the third Friday in January.
- Bills are referred to joint committees composed of both House and Senate members.

Spring–Fall (Odd Year)

- Committees hold public hearings on proposed bills.
- Stakeholders, including individuals and organizations like APTA Massachusetts, can submit written or oral testimony.
- Committees issue reports recommending bills “ought to pass,” “ought not to pass,” or “study order.”

January–July (Even Year)

- Focus shifts to floor debate and voting in the House and Senate.
- Bills that pass both chambers go to the Governor for signature or veto.
- Vetoed bills can be overridden by a two-thirds vote.

August–December (Even Year)

- Informal sessions continue, but only noncontroversial bills move forward.
- Legislators begin preparing for the next cycle—refiling bills, shaping priorities, and engaging constituents.

Why it matters: Every voice can shape policy. PTs and PTAs have unique perspectives on access, equity, and understand the value of rehabilitation in public health. Understanding the legislative cycle empowers you to engage at the right time – and make your advocacy

Where Do You Fit?

There are meaningful ways to participate at every stage of the process:

Bill Filing & Committee Referral

- Help identify pressing issues that need policy solutions.
- Voice support for APTA MA’s legislative priorities **even when they don’t impact you directly**

Public Hearings

- Submit testimony or attend hearings to show the voice of the profession.
- Share patient stories and community impact examples that connect policy to real-world outcomes.

Committee & Floor Action

- Contact your legislators to urge support or opposition.
- Collaborate with APTA MA leadership to amplify coordinated advocacy efforts.

Post-Session Engagement

- Participate in listening sessions, advocacy days, and policy planning for the next session.
- Build long-term relationships with your legislators and their staff.

APTA Massachusetts (APTA MA) is the state chapter of the American Physical Therapy Association, representing PTs, PTAs, and students across the Commonwealth. We work to ensure that every Massachusetts resident has access to high-quality, cost-effective rehabilitation care. APTA MA members are clinicians, educators, researchers, and students who use their collective voice to influence policy, strengthen practice, and promote movement as a foundation for health.