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APTA-Kansas Chapter Reimbursement Chair

Proponent Testimony on SB 430

February 11, 2026

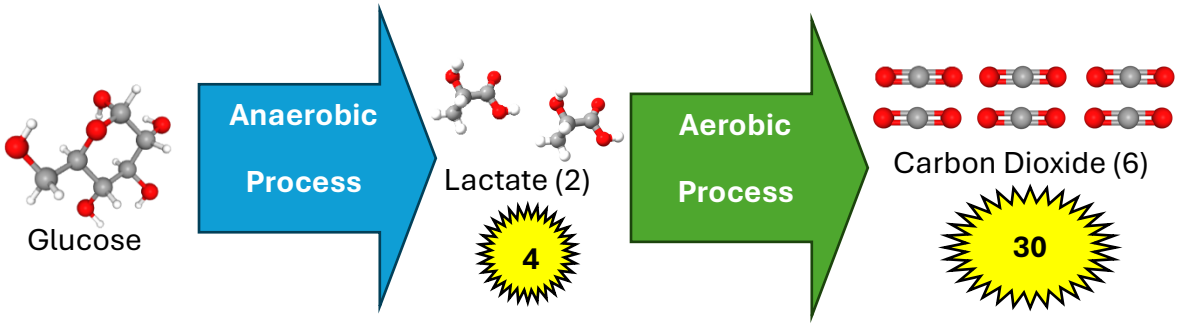
Senate Public Health and Welfare Committee

Chairperson and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to speak today.

My name is Chris Deck, and I am a licensed physical therapist in Kansas and the Reimbursement Chair for the American Physical Therapy Association – Kansas Chapter. I co-lead the student research with an epidemiologist at Wichita State University, and I also serve as Rehab Director at Bluestem PACE, in McPherson, where I regularly utilize lactate testing in my work. I am here today in strong support of Senate Bill 430, which would allow physical therapists to perform lactate testing on healthy patients.

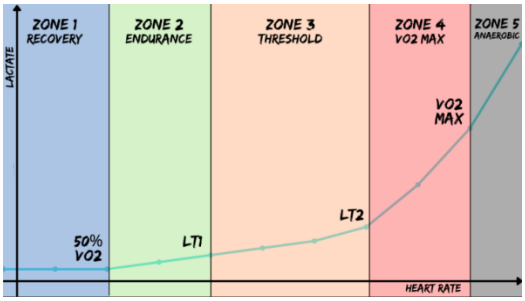
Metabolism and Lactate

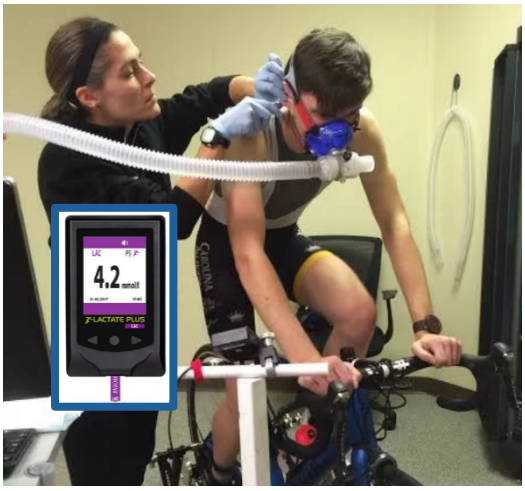
Lactate is produced during metabolism when the body breaks down glucose for energy. During low-intensity exercise, the body efficiently processes lactate using oxygen. However, during high-intensity exercise, lactate accumulates faster than it can be processed, providing a measurable indicator of exercise intensity.



Lactate and Exercise Testing

For over 50 years, lactate testing has been standard with VO_2 Max testing, because it establishes zones of exercise intensity. When someone exercises in a way that the effort continually increases to the point that they must stop, eventually, the body cannot process enough oxygen; then lactate builds up in the body.





During VO_2 Max testing, the person will exercise with increasing intensity. For example, a standard test begins at 40 watts, increasing by 20 watts each minute until the participant reaches voluntary exhaustion. During this test, lactate is measured using a hand-held device like a glucometer. Blood is obtained through a finger prick or pricking the earlobe as depicted in the image. Coaches, trainers, and exercise physiologists use lactate testing to determine an athlete's response to exercise.

Lactate is one of the best indicators of exercise intensity.

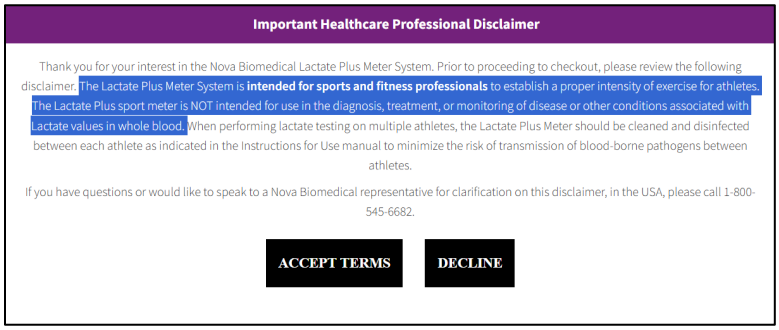
Lactate and Medicine

Lactate testing serves two distinct purposes: (1) measuring exercise intensity in healthy individuals, and (2) diagnosing medical emergencies like sepsis or liver failure in acutely ill patients. Senate Bill 430 specifically authorizes only the first use: exercise intensity testing in healthy patients.

Normal resting lactate is 0.5-1.5 mmol/L. Levels above 4.0 mmol/L may indicate an underlying health issue requiring physician referral, which physical therapists are already trained to recognize and act upon.

Lactate Testing is Only for Healthy Individuals

Because elevated lactate levels can indicate a health crisis, the manufacture of lactate meters require anyone who purchases their device to agree to these terms: The Lactate Plus Meter System is **intended for sports and fitness professionals** to establish a proper intensity of exercise for athletes. The Lactate Plus sport meter is NOT intended for use in the diagnosis, treatment, or monitoring of disease or other conditions associated with Lactate values in whole blood.



Everyone using a lactate meter must agree to use it appropriately before purchasing.

Why Lactate Testing Matters for Patient Outcomes

Recent research has established that lactate acts as a signaling molecule that triggers release of beneficial hormones including growth hormone, brain-derived neurotrophic factor, and catecholamines (see table below).

Physical therapists increasingly treat patients with depression, sarcopenia, stroke recovery, and neurodegenerative conditions—all of which benefit from exercise at specific intensities. Without lactate testing, we're essentially flying blind when prescribing exercise intensity for these patients.

Lactate-induced Hormones	Effects	Conditions
Growth Hormone	Critical for muscle protein synthesis	Sarcopenia Metabolic Syndrome
Brain-Derived Neurotrophic Factor	Generation of blood vessels and nerves in short-term memory centers in brain.	Depression Stroke Recovery Dementia
Catecholamine	Increases epinephrine/norepinephrine	Parkinson Disease PTSD

Lactate testing during regular therapy sessions can show exercise intensity.

Liability Underwriters Recommend Physical Therapists Obtain a Physician's Order

While coaches, trainers, and exercise physiology utilize lactate testing, physical therapists face uncertainty about their authority to perform this testing under Kansas law. Malpractice insurers have advised physical therapists to obtain physician orders for lactate testing, which stalls patient outcomes. Senate Bill 430 provides the clarity needed to allow physical therapists to safely utilize this established tool within their scope of practice.

Physical Therapists Already Screen for "Red Flag" Conditions

It is standard that entry-level physical therapists, who have their doctorates, are trained on "red flag" conditions, which require referral to a physician. For example, specific range of motion patterns in the hip are indicative of intra-abdominal issues. If a patient has a resting lactate level over 4.0 mmol/Liter, then they should be referred to a physician.

PTs regularly identify "red-flag" conditions and refer on when needed.

Conclusion:

- Physical therapists are just as qualified, if not more so, than coaches, trainers, and entry-level exercise physiologists, who have been doing lactate testing for decades.
- Every professional doing lactate testing must agree to the terms and conditions of the manufacturer of the lactate testing device.
- Physical therapists regularly refer when "red-flags" are encountered.

Senate Bill 430 simply clarifies that physical therapists can use the same tools that coaches and trainers have used for decades, but with more education and greater accountability through our referral obligations.

Therefore, we respectfully urge the committee to support Senate Bill 430, which will allow physical therapists to utilize established finger-prick testing to identify exercise intensity among healthy patients.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I am happy to answer any questions.

Respectfully submitted,

Chris Deck PT

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