Medical Exercise Specialist Scope of Practice

The ACE Certified Medical Exercise Specialist (CMES) is an integral member of the healthcare team who has met all the requirements of the American Council on Exercise to develop and deliver specific and complementary clinical exercise programs independently and in collaboration with other healthcare providers. The CMES has expertise in conducting assessments and designing comprehensive health and fitness programs to help clients prevent and manage disease, avoid injuries, improve overall wellness and function throughout all phases of medical interventions, and return to desired activities following rehabilitation. The CMES applies the principles of exercise science, health coaching, nutrition, psychology, corrective exercise, and pathophysiology to develop health and fitness programs for special-population clients with clinical issues (e.g., cardiovascular, pulmonary, metabolic, and musculoskeletal) in order to facilitate lasting behavior change and improve client function, health, fitness, and well-being. ACE Certified Medical Exercise Specialists have a scope of practice that includes:

- Conducting lifestyle and health-history interviews to identify readiness for physical activity, risk factors, and signs and symptoms or known diagnoses of cardiovascular, pulmonary, metabolic, renal, musculoskeletal, and other diseases, disorders, injuries, and ailments that require specialized considerations for exercise participation and the need for healthcare referrals or medical clearance before exercise participation
- Assessing static and dynamic postural stability and balance, kinetic-chain mobility during primary movement patterns, coordination, flexibility, gait (walking and running), and cardiorespiratory and muscular fitness
- Guiding clients through realistic goal setting based on their values, expectations, limitations, assessment data, and recommendations from healthcare professionals
- Developing, implementing, and modifying programs for clients in all stages of medical intervention to complement treatment and improve function, health, fitness, and performance, while mitigating the risk of diseases, disorders, ailments, and injuries
- Applying behavior-change strategies to develop and enhance rapport, optimize program adherence, and facilitate lasting health-behavior changes
- Educating clients on specific health behaviors and self-monitoring approaches to enhance program adherence, self-reliance, safety, and success

- Instructing clients on safe and effective exercise techniques using appropriate communication, coaching, and cueing strategies to optimize program outcomes and build self-efficacy
- Maintaining confidential, detailed client records according to the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA), electronic medical records, and other guidelines to track progress, make appropriate adjustments, and communicate (as necessary) with other healthcare professionals
- Responding to and managing incidents and high-risk situations following established protocols to ensure safety and reduce liability