Our 2019
## Our Impact: 2019 by the numbers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>62,000 emails</td>
<td>sent to Congress by APTA members</td>
<td>in support of APTA advocacy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>215 visits</td>
<td>to Capitol Hill by APTA staff.</td>
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<tr>
<td>10,000 letters</td>
<td>to CMS on the proposed 2020 fee schedule.</td>
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<tr>
<td>10 practice areas</td>
<td>now available for specialist certification (wound care is our most recent).</td>
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<tr>
<td>2,750</td>
<td>new certified specialists.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>341</td>
<td>physical therapist residencies and fellowships offered in 2019.</td>
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<tr>
<td>3.043</td>
<td>improved impact factor for PTJ, now the #7 rehab journal worldwide.</td>
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<tr>
<td>101 million</td>
<td>people reached by APTA's satellite media tour to raise public awareness about physical therapy.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2,000</td>
<td>enrollees in APTA Engage, the new volunteer platform.</td>
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<tr>
<td>4 million</td>
<td>visitors to ChoosePT.com to learn about the benefits of physical therapy.</td>
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<tr>
<td>17,000 attendees</td>
<td>at CSM 2019, the second-largest ever.</td>
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<tr>
<td>260% increase</td>
<td>in the number of APTA members who refinanced their student loans through APTA's Financial Solutions Center.</td>
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<tr>
<td>24 clinical practice guidelines</td>
<td>now developed in partnership with APTA.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34 clinical practice guidelines</td>
<td>in development.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>75,000 patient encounters</td>
<td>captured in the APTA Physical Therapy Outcomes Registry.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>15,000</td>
<td>students, parents, teachers, counselors, and career advisors reached at student recruitment events as APTA encourages the next generation of PTs and PTAs.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26 states</td>
<td>now part of the Physical Therapy Compact.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
“At its best, leadership is an invitation from a visionary for others to join a crusade — a crusade to foster the common good.”

-Jules Rothstein, PT, PhD

Those words were written more than two decades ago by one of the great minds of the physical therapy profession. They are more relevant today than ever.

As APTA approaches its centennial in 2021, we have witnessed a shift. The physical therapy profession is embracing Jules Rothstein’s definition of leadership more definitively than ever. APTA is looking outward and looking forward, taking action today that will help us shape a better future for the patients and clients we serve.

And as this review shows, we are leading by inviting others to join us. The past year included a wealth of collaborative efforts between APTA and other organizations, and more member engagement than ever before.

Our 2019 was full of singular moments, but it also reminds us that no matter the year, some things never change: There will always be challenges, and more to do.

Thank you for your leadership, your vision, and your investment in our profession to improve the health of society.

Sharon Dunn, PT, PhD
Board-Certified Orthopaedic Clinical Specialist
President

Justin Moore, PT, DPT
Chief Executive Officer
Our Leadership
Making a difference

Strong leadership takes on challenges in the present to build a thriving future. In 2019, we helped members with student debt, continued to strengthen the evidence base for the profession, improved patient access, and raised public awareness about the benefits of physical therapy. As our membership grows, so does our potential. We’re moving forward, toward our centennial in 2021 and our next 100 years.
Our Leadership: A closer look

We’re helping members with student debt. In 2019, more than 1,800 members refinanced their student loans through APTA’s Financial Solutions Center, a 260% increase over 2018. Along the way, the APTA Financial Solutions Center won a national “Power of A” award from the American Society of Association Executives for its innovative service to members.

We’re building the evidence base for the profession. The APTA Physical Therapy Outcomes Registry increased enrollment by 50% in 2019. The Registry now houses records of more than 75,000 patient encounters from more than 500,000 patient visits with participating PTs. Besides being a key player in the collection of data to improve patient care and strengthen the profession, the Registry serves as a reporting agent for all Merit-based Incentive Payment System — MIPS — categories and was again designated as a Qualified Clinical Data Registry by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services.

Our ChoosePT media tour reached 101 million people. During National Pain Awareness Month in September, APTA once again took to the airwaves, offering local media the opportunity to interview member Sarah Wenger, PT, DPT, on the complicated nature of pain and the ways physical therapy can help. The tour generated 757 airings on local television and radio, and included a Facebook Live broadcast hosted by Women’s Health magazine.

We made a great consumer website even better. Leveraging the success of our #ChoosePT opioid awareness campaign, we retooled MoveForwardPT.com, our 10-year-old consumer-focused website, renaming it ChoosePT.com. The new ChoosePT.com site includes improvements in many areas, including a more robust “Find a PT” online directory. Traffic to the site continued to grow, reaching nearly 4 million users in 2019.

Our scientific journal is making a stronger impact. PTJ, our research journal, is now ranked #7 among rehabilitation journals worldwide for its “Impact”—the frequency with which PTJ articles are cited in other journals. PTJ’s impact factor as determined by Journal Citation Reports is now 3.043.

We’re keeping the problem of administrative burden in the spotlight. A 2019 APTA survey provided clear results: PTs and PTAs across the country agree that overreaching documentation and administrative mandates negatively affect patient outcomes and contribute to clinician burnout. We’re using those results to make our case to policymakers in efforts that include support for legislation that would decrease prior authorization requirements.

We’re impacting commercial payment. Our collaborative work with UnitedHealthcare (UHC) resulted in UHC’s launch of a pilot program in 5 states that waives copays and deductibles for 3 physical therapy sessions for people with low back pain to encourage conservative treatment. Later in the year, UHC announced that it will be expanding the program to more states in 2020.

Our voice is influencing best practices in pain management. Our public and written comments to a US Department of Health and Human Services inter-agency task force on pain management helped to shape the group’s final report, advocating for “restorative therapies” such as physical therapy to be on equal footing with pharmacological approaches to pain management, particularly when it comes to payment and patient access.

We’re leading the way on clinical practice guidelines. APTA continued to support its sections in the development of clinical practice guidelines (CPGs), and the list of on-point resources continues to grow: two more CPGs were published in 2019, bringing the total number of CPGs developed by APTA and its sections to 24, with another 34 on the way. We’re also partnering with the American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons on the development of APTA’s own first CPG, on total knee arthroplasty, due out for public comment in 2020.

We’re supporting research that shows the value of physical therapy. APTA made a $1 million investment to build capacity in health services research, and it’s paying off: Now concluding its fourth year, the Center on Health Services Training and Research — CoHSTAR — has yielded 96 peer-reviewed publications, 15 faculty and postdoctoral fellows, and 14 pilot studies to build our evidence base for payment and outcomes in physical therapy.
Our Voice
Fueling Change

A transformative vision demands transformative action and a unified voice. In 2019, we answered the challenge of US Surgeon General Jerome Adams, MD, MPH, who called the profession “well-positioned to change the culture around pain management” to reduce opioid use. Meanwhile we adopted public policy priorities that take on challenging issues affecting the daily work of our members while constantly seeking opportunities to contribute to positive societal change.
Our Voice: A closer look

We’re taking on a challenge from the Surgeon General. During his speech to APTA component leaders, US Surgeon General Jerome Adams stressed the importance of health care providers’ access to the overdose-reversing drug naloxone. The APTA House of Delegates responded by adopting a position statement supporting the availability of naloxone in facilities in which physical therapy is provided—and the training of PTs and PTAs to administer the drug.

We’re speaking out. Together. When CMS announced an estimated 8% cut to payment for outpatient physical therapy under Medicare in 2021, APTA members mobilized in a dramatic way, generating thousands of letters pointing out the harm the cuts could do to patients. And we’re not done fighting.

We took the student debt message to Capitol Hill. The burden of student debt poses one of the biggest challenges to the goal of a physical therapy workforce as diverse as the people we serve. We arranged for member Sandy Norby, PT, DPT, to share the real-world effects of student debt on PTs and PTAs during testimony to the US House of Representatives Committee on Small Businesses.

We’re working for legislation that could help address the nation’s opioid crisis—and relieve some PT student debt. Our advocacy team is pressing for passage of The Physical Therapist Workforce and Patient Access Act, a bill that would allow PTs to participate in the National Health Services Corps. The change would increase patient access to physical therapy and open up the possibility for student loan repayment for participating PTs.

Our students motivated advocacy through the flash action strategy. This year’s flash action strategy—an intensive 2-day grassroots advocacy push—generated a total of 17,500 communications to legislators, one of the largest in the initiative’s history. Through the advocacy event, we called on Congress to pass legislation to include PTs in the National Health Services Corps and its loan repayment program.

We’ve been an educator and advocate during changes to postacute care payment. Before CMS finalized its payment rules for skilled nursing facilities and home health care agencies, we spoke up for our members and their patients, and we were able to make improvements to the finalized payment models. With the final rules out and new models in place, we’re engaging in extensive efforts to educate members on the new systems—and to dispel myths circulating among providers.

We’re supporting a federal plan to encourage a more diverse profession. We crafted policies that Congress turned into legislation — The Allied Health Workforce Diversity Act of 2019. The bill, passed by the US House and awaiting action in the Senate, would set aside money for use by accredited education programs in physical therapy, occupational therapy, audiology, and speech-language pathology to issue scholarships or stipends to students from underrepresented populations including racial or ethnic minorities and students from disadvantaged backgrounds including economic status and disability.

We made a powerful statement on the need for nonpharmacological alternatives to pain treatment. In May, we held two congressional briefings on the need for federal support of pain treatment alternatives, with presenters that included two PTs and a parent whose son became addicted to prescription opioids as a high school athlete and spent his next 10 years addicted to heroin.

We’re engaging with CMS on multiple fronts—and we’re not letting up. In a year that featured some of the most far-reaching changes affecting physical therapy delivered under Medicare, we spoke up for the profession and our patients. Our work leveraged every advocacy avenue available, from an in-person meeting with CMS Administrator Seema Verma to grassroots letter-writing campaigns by APTA members. There were victories — CMS finalized a proposal to allows PTAs to furnish maintenance therapy in home health, backed down on an burdensome plan that would’ve required additional documentation when therapy services were delivered by a PTA, and released a rule easing some administrative burdens, among other gains. Challenges remain, but so does our readiness to fight for needed change.

We assisted our chapters in a big year for advocacy wins at the state level. Thanks to the work of APTAs’s state chapters, the profession made gains across the country, including further expansion of the Physical Therapy Compact to 26 states since its launch in 2016. Together, we also expanded direct access provisions, as well as favorable changes in telehealth, dry needling, and limits on copays and cost-sharing.

Our advocacy portfolio continues to grow. We’re working for changes targeting a wide range of crucial issues for the profession and its patients, from telehealth access to reduced administrative burden, to full federal funding for early intervention and treatment services for children with disabilities, to improved lymphedema treatment. And we’re making it easier than ever for members to join advocacy efforts through our “take action” webpage and APTA Advocacy app.
Our Community
Inspiring Engagement

APTA members don’t just support the association — they connect to propel the profession forward. Signs of the value of membership are all around, from a hugely successful APTA Combined Sections Meeting (CSM) to record-breaking numbers of members achieving specialist certification. And none of APTA’s achievements would be possible without our community of engaged members dedicated to progress.
Our Community: A closer look

Our members are...

Celebrating the PTA. PTAs first entered the workforce in 1969. We celebrated the 50th anniversary of the PTA with parties, an updated history of the profession, a special look back in our blog, and more.

Connecting with peers. CSM 2019 was the second largest in APTA history, with nearly 17,000 in attendance. This conference has become the signature event for career development in the field of physical therapy.

Increasing the profession’s expertise. APTA welcomed a record 2,750 new certified specialists in 2019, bringing the total number of physical therapists with specialist certifications to more than 25,000, including the inaugural class of board-certified oncologic clinical specialists. In addition, 2019 set a record for the number of enrollees in APTA’s PTA Advanced Proficiencies Pathway program.

Supporting residencies and fellowships. The number of accredited residencies and fellowships rose to 341 in 2019, with 109 applications in the works. Also in 2019, APTA established an awards program for Outstanding Physical Therapist Resident and Outstanding Physical Therapist Fellow.

Getting involved. APTA launched APTA Engage, an online portal that makes it easy for members to connect with national and chapter-based volunteer opportunities, from long-term appointments to work groups, to one-off projects such as writing their own “APTA Love Story.” The new system is a hit, with nearly 2,000 enrollees and strong early participation from state chapters.

Supporting minority scholarships. Our 2019 Celebration of Diversity Gala was a record-breaker, attracting some 360 attendees to honor this year’s recipients of the APTA Minority Scholarship Awards. Proceeds from the gala—the highest amount received in the event’s history—support the Minority Scholarship Fund.

Pursuing excellence in education through an award-winning program. Again in 2019, a class of seasoned physical therapy education leaders pursued an even deeper understanding of their work through APTA’s Education Leadership Institute Fellowship, which was named a recipient of a national award for leadership and innovation from the American Society of Association Executives.

Sharing their stories. Member voices were driving some of the year’s most popular and compelling communications, from personal perspectives shared in APTA’s blogs to moving first-person accounts of what led a member to a career in physical therapy.
Our Outreach
Strengthening connections

Our potential is greater when we work together. We’re doing just that in both the health care environment and society at large. Our official partnership with the Special Olympics is helping to foster a better understanding of the importance of year-round health care for people with disabilities, and our community service activities at APTA’s national conferences have made a direct impact on local communities. At the same time, we’re building relationships with other organizations by finding common ground from which to work toward needed changes in health care.
We're helping to bring physical therapy to where it's needed. Our partnership with Move Together helps to establish physical therapy clinics in areas of the world where care is lacking. And our work with Special Olympics brought us to the World Games in Dubai.

We're improving our teamwork with athletic trainers. In December 2018, we joined the National Association of Athletic Trainers in a commitment to greater collaboration in areas such as legislative efforts, public relations, and interprofessional practice. That collaboration continued in 2019 when NATA President Tory Lindley, MA, ATC, joined APTA President Sharon Dunn, PT, PhD, for conversations at meetings of both APTA and NATA.

APTA, UnitedHealthCare, and OptumLabs are collaborating to look at increased use of physical therapy. Together, we've explored the efficacy of physical therapy as a first treatment option for low back pain as well as the effects insurer payment policies have on patient access to more conservative approaches to the condition. Those efforts yielded three research articles in 2019: a study affirming that higher copays and payer restrictions steer patients away from conservative low back pain treatments; an analysis that found lower odds of early and long-term opioid use among patients who see a PT first for low back pain; and an investigation that showed a correlation between unrestricted direct access and lower utilization and cost for patients with new-onset low back pain. APTA cosponsored all three studies.

We're part of a joint project that produced the largest multipractice analysis of open-source, risk-adjusted clinical outcomes in the outpatient physical therapy industry. Our work with the Alliance for Physical Therapy Quality and Innovation looked at baseline and patient-reported outcomes data from 375,000 episodes in 50 states to produce a report that explores benchmarks of quality care.

We're building the next generation. In 2019, we ramped up our student recruitment efforts, participating in local, regional, and national events aimed at introducing students high school age and younger to the physical therapy profession. An estimated 15,000 students, parents, teachers, guidance counselors, and career coaches gained firsthand knowledge of the profession and its role in transforming health care. Those efforts were strengthened through a partnership with the Health Occupations Students of America and its Future Health Professionals program.

We worked with with AOTA and ASHA to establish a tool for evaluating habilitation and rehabilitation benefit adequacy. Together with the American Occupational Therapy Association and American Speech-Language-Hearing Association we created a benefits evaluation guide that emphasizes transparency, access, and affordability. The guide forgoes offering a laundry list of specific benefits in favor of establishing a set of principles that the associations believe lead to appropriate coverage of habilitative and rehabilitative services.

We formalized partnerships with the US Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and the American College of Sports Medicine (ACSM). We began 2019 with the announcement of two partnerships: one with VA aimed at increasing veterans’ awareness of physical therapy and create practice opportunities for PTs and PTAs; and a second with ACSM to explore opportunities for collaboration on improving health through movement. VA and ACSM join Special Olympics, Move Together, the American Academy of Orthopaedic Manual Physical Therapists, and the Federation of State Boards of Physical Therapy as organizations partnering with APTA.

We're connecting consumers with more relevant information on physical therapy in their state. Powered by new geolocation capabilities offered through ChoosePT.com, we're working with our chapters to deliver more customized content to site visitors.

We're getting a seat at the table in a growing number of important organizations. From service on an American Medical Association editorial panel to modernize its guides to the evaluation of permanent impairment to CMS advisory panels on hospital outpatient payment, education, and outreach, our members and staff are being asked to provide their physical therapy-based expertise in a range of settings. Other areas of participation include postacute payment, health insurance contracting, CMS technical expert panels on nursing home and long-term care outcomes, the National Coalition for Promoting Physical Activity, Movement is Life National Caucus, the Osteoarthritis Action Alliance, the National Academies of Medicine’s Global Forum on Innovation in Health Professional Education, and the US Bone and Joint Initiative.

We're invested in our neighborhood. APTA's service program provides multiple opportunities for APTA staff at our national headquarters to make a difference in the Alexandria community, from blood drives to school supply donations, to participation in a community program that gives children with disabilities the opportunity to play baseball.
Our Future
Moving Ahead

The best way to honor the past is to shape the future. We see our 100th anniversary in 2021 as a springboard into our next century. We’re exploring who we were and who we are, and we’ve channeled that exploration into the development of a new brand and website set to launch in 2020. Meanwhile, APTA is preparing to move into a new national headquarters that will reflect the values the profession places on movement and collaboration.
We're launching a new APTA logo. We unveiled our future logo in June 2019, but we're staging implementation for mid-2020. The new design plays tribute to our logo history and evokes movement that points to a more open, outward-facing organization.

The new logo is part of a vast coordinated and connected APTA brand strategy. APTA's new brand strategy includes opportunities for APTA's chapters and sections to align with APTA-leading names that will make the association easier to navigate and better express the value of membership. By year end, 11 of 18 sections and 39 of 51 APTA chapters had indicated their intent to align with the new brand by the end of 2021.

APTA.org is getting a makeover. Implementation of APTA's new logo will coincide with the launch of a new APTA.org website, which will provide a more streamlined user experience that increases the value of membership.

We're continuing to work on challenges that could shape our future. In her annual address, APTA President Sharon Dunn called for action on the cost of higher education and the burden of student debt, particularly among graduates of physical therapy programs. We're responding through federal advocacy, but we're also preparing a major report on the state of PT and PTA student debt to be released in 2020.

We're investing in early-career researchers and new research. In 2019, APTA invested over $500,000 to support the Foundation for Physical Therapy Research, which was able to award 20 scholarships and a 2-year fellowship to promising physical therapist researchers. Additionally, APTA's support funded a $40,000 health services research pipeline grant.

We're building a new headquarters. In January, current and former APTA leaders gathered to celebrate the groundbreaking of APTA Centennial Center, a 7-story, 115,000-square-foot building in Alexandria, Virginia, that will become the association’s national headquarters beginning in 2021.

We're helping membership grow. Beyond leveraging our new brand strategy to better articulate the value of being a member, we're looking at new ways to increase membership through initiatives such as our recent ONE by ONE member referral campaign.

We're preparing for our centennial. Planning for the APTA centennial is under way, with interest being sparked through a special website — centennial.apta.org — and the opening of an APTA time capsule stored in our current headquarters in 1983. Coming in 2020: more details about a string of special ways to engage, serve, and celebrate in 2021 — including a big party being planned for CSM 2021 in Orlando.
Our Mission
Building a community that advances the profession of physical therapy to improve the health of society.

Our association’s work is about connection. The physical therapy profession is built on strong relationships: relationships with patients, with peers, with other clinicians, and with the broader communities we serve.

Our Vision
Transforming society by optimizing movement to improve the human experience.

Our vision reflects the very heart of a profession that believes everyone deserves the fullest possible life, with dignity, independence, and long-term health and vitality. We understand that movement has the power to change lives, and that changed lives are the key to a better future for everyone.
Our Thanks
To our official partners

American Academy of Orthopaedic Manual Physical Therapists
Gold Strategic Business Partners
HPSO
RockTape

American College of Sports Medicine
Silver Strategic Business Partners
Chattanooga
Laurel Road
Net Health
Normatec
Performance Health
Rusk Rehabilitation

Federation of State Boards of Physical Therapy

Move Together

Special Olympics

United States Department of Veterans Affairs

Bronze Strategic Business Partners
Freeman
GEICO
Hocoma
Hospital for Special Surgery (HSS)
Parker Laboratories, Inc.
Scorebuilders
Look for more information in the 2019 APTA annual report, coming in spring 2020

apta.org