

New APTA Report Reveals Payer Administrative Burdens Continue to Strain Physical Therapists and Impede Patient Care



NOT FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
Nov. 12, 2025

Contact: Sara Shannon
[**sarashannon@apta.org**](mailto:sarashannon@apta.org)

ALEXANDRIA, Va. — The American Physical Therapy Association announces the release of “[The Impact of Administrative Burden on Physical Therapist Services](#),” a comprehensive report revealing how payer-imposed requirements are increasingly straining physical therapist practices and restricting patients’ access to timely, effective care.

The new report analyzes findings from APTA’s third administrative burden survey, conducted in mid-2025, and compares the results with those from previous surveys conducted in 2018 and 2022. The survey, distributed to nearly 19,000 physical therapists across various practice settings, provides a seven-year perspective on the growing challenges posed by prior authorization, documentation, appeals, and other payer-related demands.

“The data is clear — administrative burden is excessive, unsustainable, and continues to hinder both physical therapists and the patients they serve,” said APTA President Kyle Covington, PT, DPT, PhD. “Without meaningful reform, these barriers will continue to strain the workforce and impede timely access to care.”

Key Findings

- **Delays Are Increasing:** Nearly one in three physical therapists now report waiting one to two weeks for prior authorization approval — up 9 percentage points since 2018.
- **Patient Outcomes Are Worsening:** 85% of respondents reported that prior authorization negatively affects patients’ clinical outcomes.
- **Patients Are Abandoning Care:** 83% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that authorization delays have caused patients to stop treatment altogether.
- **Operational Strain:** Three out of four practices have hired administrative staff solely to manage payer requirements, diverting resources from patient care.
- **Rising Costs and Burnout:** 57% of respondents reported that administrative burden has forced their practice to discontinue participation with at least one payer network.

The report underscores how administrative tasks, such as prior authorization, appeals, and documentation requirements, pose more than just an inconvenience to providers; they are a growing threat to patient access and outcomes in physical therapy.

“Reducing administrative burden is central to APTA’s strategic priority of improving payment across all payers and regulatory reforms,” Covington added. “By streamlining these requirements, we empower physical therapists to focus on patient care, improve financial sustainability, and ensure patients receive the services they need, when they need them.”

An accompanying infographic illustrates the state of administrative burden in 2025, detailing the effect on both providers and patients.

Review the [full report and infographic](#).

###

About APTA

The American Physical Therapy Association represents more than 100,000 physical therapists, physical therapist assistants, and physical therapy students nationwide. Visit [the APTA website](#) to learn more.