

APTA Releases New Workforce and Income Data, Highlighting Growth, Demand, and Opportunities in Physical Therapy



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ALEXANDRIA, Va. — The American Physical Therapy Association announces the release of two major workforce reports that provide the most up-to-date and comprehensive portrait of the physical therapy profession. Drawing on responses from more than 4,000 physical therapists and physical therapist assistants in APTA's 2025 Physical Therapy Profile Survey, the findings offer valuable insights to support career decision-making, workforce planning, and federal and state advocacy efforts.

"APTA's latest workforce and income reports reveal a profession that is growing, in demand, and making meaningful progress, yet still facing critical challenges that require continued focus," said APTA President Kyle Covington, PT, DPT, PhD. "By providing the physical therapy community with clear, actionable data, we can more effectively advocate for fair payment, strengthen and diversify the workforce, and ensure patients nationwide receive the timely care they deserve."

The reports, "[A Physical Therapy Profile: Demographics of the Profession](#)" and "[A Physical Therapy Profile: Incomes for the Profession](#)," detail emerging trends in income, diversity, labor supply, and student enrollment. Together, they shine a light on a profession that is growing rapidly, evolving to meet patient needs, and positioned for continued positive impact within the U.S. health care system.

A Growing Workforce Signals Rising Demand

With more than 400,000 employees in the profession, physical therapy remains a cornerstone of the U.S. health care workforce. The new data reveals annual workforce growth of 2%–4% among PTs and PTAs, driven by rising interest in the profession and increased enrollment in doctor of physical therapy programs. PTA programs, after several years of declining enrollment, have rebounded since 2022.

Demand for physical therapist services remains high: Nearly half of PT respondents report that their capacity cannot meet local demand. This underscores the expanding role of physical therapy in improving mobility, managing chronic conditions, and supporting healthy aging.

Income Trends Reinforce the Need for Advocacy

The reports also examine income across age, gender, professional credentials, and other factors. While both PT and PTA incomes have increased in recent years, they have not kept pace with inflation since 2016; a reality that reinforces APTA's commitment to advocating for fair and sustainable compensation for physical therapist services.

The data show that PTs with post-professional credentials such as board certification from the American Board of Physical Therapy Specialties, fellowship completion, or additional graduate degrees are more likely to earn higher incomes. At the same time, differences in earnings by gender begin to emerge around age 40, with a widening gap that reaches approximately \$16,000 a year by age 65 for PTs. These insights will help the association continue to shape policy priorities around equity and fair payment.

Workforce Distribution Across Regions Continues to Affect Patient Access

Access to physical therapist services varies considerably across the country. Respondents report local PT shortages most commonly in the South and West, while reports of PTA shortages are concentrated in the Northeast and West. New patients currently face an average 15-day wait for physical therapist services, with longer delays in some states, underscoring the need for workforce planning to ensure timely, high-quality access to care.

Diversity Gains Require Continued Focus

APTA's data reveals encouraging gains in racial and ethnic diversity among younger PT and PTA cohorts. This is a positive sign for a profession committed to reflecting the communities it serves. Continued focus in this area essential to ensuring equitable access to care across the country.

Together, the findings from APTA's latest workforce and income reports provide a clear portrait of a profession that is growing, evolving, and in strong demand. Rising DPT and PTA enrollments, changing demographics, and regional labor shortages highlight new opportunities and shifting workforce dynamics. At the same time, incomes that lag inflation, along with pay variability by credentials, setting, gender, and career stage, highlight areas where continued advocacy is vital. These insights give PTs, PTAs, and policymakers information that could advance fair payment, strengthen workforce planning, support career development, and ensure patients nationwide have access to timely, high-quality care.

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About APTA

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