

# OCTOBER 2018 FACT SHEET

## Physical Therapists and Physical Therapist Assistants in North Dakota

Physical therapists (PTs) and physical therapist assistants (PTAs) both work to help individuals regain or recover from physical injuries or disease conditions. PTs are movement experts trained to evaluate and treat patients based on individual needs, clinical experience and the latest research. PTs use exercise, hands-on care and patient education to help patients who are recovering from injuries, surgeries, and different illnesses to regain movement and manage pain. PTAs work under the direction and supervision of a licensed PT to assist in executing the rehabilitation plan.

Based on licensure data from the North Dakota Board of Physical Therapy, there were 1,005 licensed providers as of 2018. This included 837 PTs and 168 PTAs.

### Physical Therapy Education

- Most PTs practicing in North Dakota have their doctorate in physical therapy (DPT; 54.8%), followed by master's (25.5%), and bachelor's degrees (18.7%).
- Over half (53.0%) of all licensed PTs in North Dakota graduated from the University of North Dakota.
- Most PTAs in North Dakota (97.3%) reported having an associate degree. A small number reported having a certificate (1.4%) or other qualification (1.4%).
- Most PTs and PTAs graduated from a North Dakota school. Among PTs, 79.0% graduated from a North Dakota school; among PTAs, 38.0% were educated in the state.

**Table 1. Primary Workplace for PTs and PTAs in North Dakota**

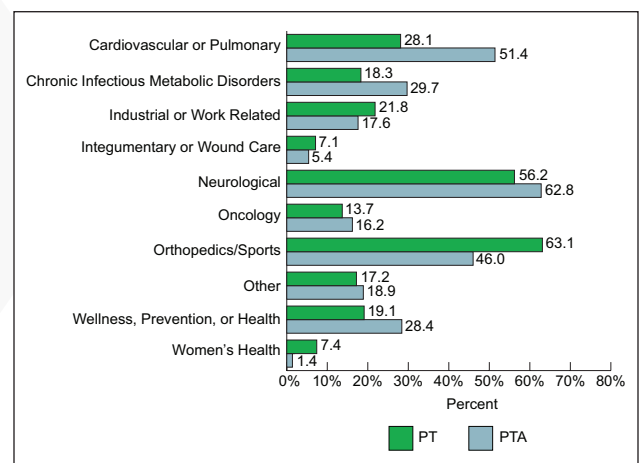
Workplace	PT		PTA	
	N	%	N	%
Outpatient	441	54.9	42	28.4
Long Term Care	26	3.2	4	2.7
Acute Care Inpatient	86	10.7	60	40.5
Rehab Facility	91	11.3	21	14.2
Home Care	49	6.1	7	4.7
Post-Secondary Academic Institution	36	4.5	0	0.0
School System	27	3.4	9	6.1
Other	47	5.9	5	3.4
<b>All</b>	<b>803</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>148</b>	<b>100.0</b>

- PTs and PTAs work in a variety of settings (Table 1). PTs were most likely to work in an outpatient setting (54.9%) or rehab facilities (11.3%), whereas PTAs typically worked in acute care inpatient (40.5%) or outpatient settings (28.4%).

### Work Environment for PTs and PTAs

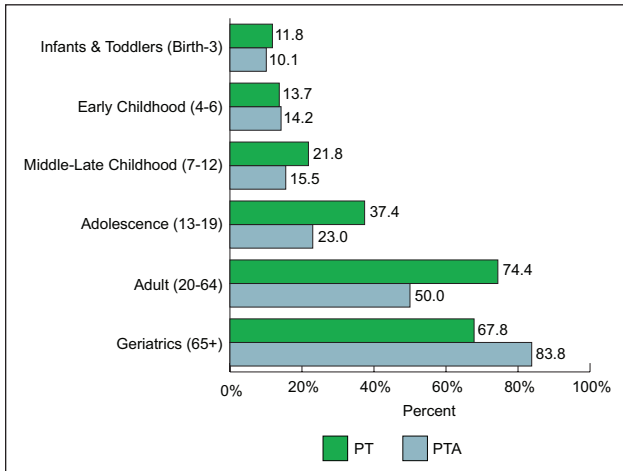
A majority of PTs (65.2%) worked in urban areas, compared to 49.3% of PTAs. Following urban areas were large rural areas where 15.7% and 26.4% of PTs and PTAs, respectively, were working. About 7.0% of PTs and 8.8% of PTAs worked in small rural areas, which is lower than the number of PTs (12.1%) and PTAs (15.5%) who worked in isolated rural areas.

**Figure 1. Primary Patient Injury or Condition Reported by PTs and PTAs**



- Figure 1 shows some of the primary injuries or conditions that PTs and PTAs may assist with. Because individuals may require more than one type of care, the total percentages will be greater than 100.0%.
- PTs were most likely to see patients with orthopedic/sports (63.1%) and neurological issues (56.2%). PTAs most often reported working with neurological problems (62.8%) and cardiovascular or pulmonary conditions (51.4%).

**Figure 2. Primary Patient Ages for North Dakota PTs and PTAs**



- Most PTs reported working with adults between the ages of 20-64 (74.4%), followed by individuals 65 years and older (67.8%) (Figure 2).
- PTAs worked primarily with those 65 years and older (83.8%), in addition to adults (50.0%).

#### Employment Status and Future Plans

Most PTs (90.0%) were employed by their organization or institution, compared to 7.4% that were self-employed. Approximately 2.8% of PTs reported their employment status as being a combination of employed and self-employed. Among PTAs, 98.0% were employed; none were solely self-employed, although 2.0% reported their employment status as being a combination of self-employed and employed. Regarding future plans, 90.5% of PTs and 87.8% of PTAs reported no planned changes in the future. Only 3.9% of PTs and 6.8% of PTAs expected an increase in working hours while 2.1% of PTs and 2.0% of PTAs expected a decrease in their working hours.

#### University of North Dakota Doctor of Physical Therapy Program

In addition to state licensure data, information was also collected among graduates of the Doctor of Physical Therapy program at the University of North Dakota. In May of 2017, 48 students graduated from the University of North Dakota (UND) Physical Therapy program. Among the 45 survey respondents, approximately 34.0% of students were from North Dakota, 52.0% were from Minnesota, and the remaining students came from South Dakota (2.0%), Wyoming (7.0%), and other states (5.0%). The majority of graduates (91.0%) were employed as physical therapists and

97.0% worked full time while 3.0% worked part time. Of 2017 graduates, approximately 21.0% were employed in North Dakota, 44.0% in Minnesota, 3.0% in Montana, and 9.0% in Wyoming. Most graduates practiced in an outpatient clinic, with an average salary of \$68,260 per year.

#### Conclusion

- As of 2018, there were 837 PTs and 168 PTAs working in the state.
- PTs and PTAs were most likely to work in an outpatient setting, an acute care inpatient location, or a rehab facility. They primarily worked with clients having orthopedic/sports or neurological conditions.
- Both PTs (65.2%) and PTAs (49.3%) primarily worked in urban areas.

#### Data

- North Dakota Board of Physical Therapy. (2018). Licensure file. Retrieved from [https://www.ndbpt.org/pt\\_licensure.asp](https://www.ndbpt.org/pt_licensure.asp).
- UND Doctor of Physical Therapy Program. (2017). UND Physical Therapy Internal Program Data.