As the state’s shortage of health care workers intensifies, there is a growing need for information about the supply of and demand for health care professionals. For that reason, this physical therapist workforce fact sheet was created to provide Minnesota policy makers, employers, educators, consumers, and others with an overview of current information.

Physical Therapist Workforce Fact Sheet

Physical therapists (PTs) work in a variety of settings including hospitals, clinics, and private offices. Regardless of the setting, they work with patients to restore function, mobility, and overall fitness and health. PT’s patients include accident victims, individuals with chronic pain, heart disease, cerebral palsy and other health issues. PTs collect medical histories, and measure strength and motor functions in order to develop treatments and desired outcomes for their patients. They also evaluate a patient’s ability to function independently and re-enter the workforce.  

- In 2001, there were over 3,200 physical therapists with an active Minnesota license. Eighty-three percent (approximately 2,700 physical therapists) are employed in Minnesota. Nationally, PTs held about 120,000 jobs in 1998.
- The median wage for physical therapists increased from $15.25 in 1990 to $25.68 in 2001, a 24 percent increase in real wages. This above average increase suggests that the demand for PTs has remained strong.
- In the 1990s, the number of physical therapists graduating from Minnesota schools more than doubled from 60 in 1990 to 130 by the end of the decade. Sixty percent of PTs employed in Minnesota received their training within the state. This increase in the number of graduates counters trends in other health professions where the number of graduates has not increased over time. This finding suggests that PT programs have been able to keep up with employers’ demands for professionals. See Figure 1.
- Half of all active physical therapists report having received specialized training. Of these, the largest group is trained in orthopedics.
For more information about the fact sheet, please contact Michael Grover by phone at (651) 282-5642 or email at michael.grover@health.state.mn.us.

Figure 3: Age Distribution of Minnesota's Physical Therapist Workforce, 2001

For more information about this fact sheet, please contact Michael Grover by phone at (651) 282-5642 or email at michael.grover@health.state.mn.us.

This information will be made available in alternative format - large print, Braille, or audiotape - upon request. Available on the Web at: www.health.state.mn/divs/chs/workforce.htm.