

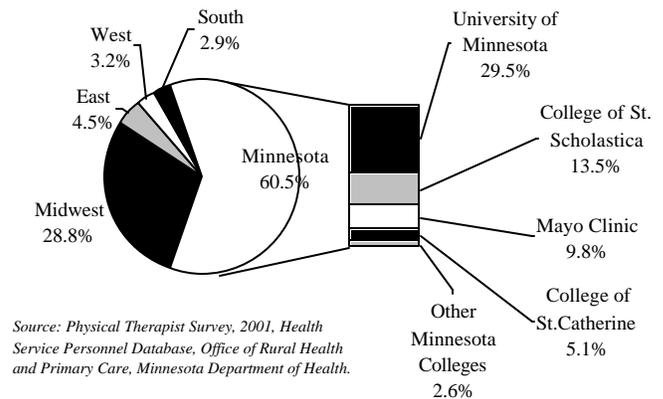
As the state's shortage of health care workers intensifies, there is a growing need for information about the supply of and demand for health care professionals. For that reason, this physical therapist workforce fact sheet was created to provide Minnesota policy makers, employers, educators, consumers,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

## Physical Therapist Workforce Fact Sheet

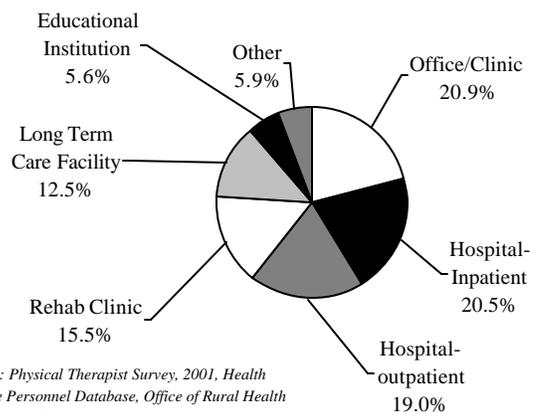
Physical therapists (PTs) work in a variety of settings including hospitals, clinics, and private offices. Regardless of the setting, they work with patients to restore function, mobility, and overall fitness and health. PT's patients include accident victims, individuals with chronic pain, heart disease, 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.<sup>1</sup>

- 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.<sup>2</sup> Nationally, PTs held about 120,000 jobs in 1998.<sup>3</sup>
- The median wage for physical therapists increased from \$15.25 in 1990 to \$25.68 in 2001, a 24 percent increase in real wages.<sup>4</sup> 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 (31

**Figure 1: Educational Training Location for Active Minnesota Physical Therapists, 2001**

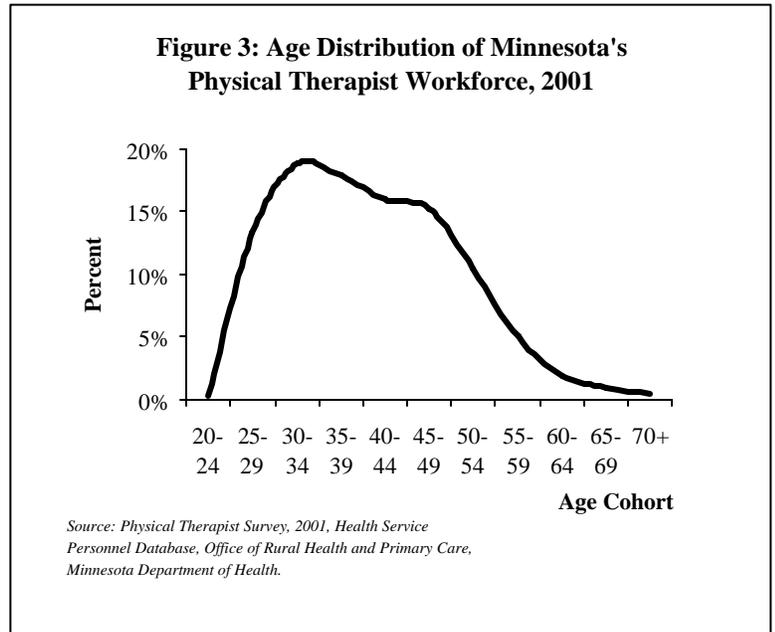


**Figure 2: Minnesota Physical Therapists by Employment Site, 2001**



percent). Half of all active PTs report planning to pursue additional physical therapy training in the next five years.

- Physical therapists in Minnesota work in a variety of primary settings. Sixty percent work in an office, clinical or hospital setting. See Figure 2.
- Seventy-five percent of Minnesota's physical therapists practice in the Twin Cities region and Olmsted, Saint Louis, and Stearns counties.
- On average Minnesota PTs work a total of 34.2 hours per week. The majority (57.1 percent) work more than 40 hours per week. Nine out of ten report direct patient care as their primary activity.
- Minnesota PTs have been with their current employer an average of 6.3 years. One fifth of all physical therapists report starting a new position with a new employer in the last year.
- On average, physical therapists are younger than other health professionals in the state. The average age of PTs in Minnesota is 40. See Figure 3.



**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.**

**Notes**

<sup>1</sup> Unless otherwise noted, all of the findings in this worksheet are based on data collected through the Physical Therapist Survey, 2001, Health Service Personnel Database, Office of Rural Health and Primary Care, Minnesota Department of Health.  
<sup>2</sup> Physical Therapist Survey, 2001; Minnesota Department of Health; Wage and Staffing Estimates, 2000, Minnesota Department of Economic Security, see: [http://www.bls.gov/oes/2000/oes\\_mn.htm](http://www.bls.gov/oes/2000/oes_mn.htm).  
<sup>3</sup> Physical Therapists, Occupational Outlook Handbook. 2001-01, Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2000.  
<sup>4</sup> The consumer price index (CPI-U) was used to measure inflation. Bureau of labor Statistics, Consumer Price Index (U). Minnesota Department of Economic Security, 1990 and 2000 (2001 estimate) salary surveys.

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

**Health Service Personnel Survey and Database**

In 1993, the Minnesota Legislature mandated regular surveys of the state's health care providers on a variety of issues. To meet this challenge, the Health Services Personnel Survey and Database Program was created within the Office of Rural Health and Primary Care at the Minnesota Department of Health. The Office maintains a database of about 110,000 Minnesota medical professionals. Although these health practitioners do not have to complete the surveys to renew licensure or registration, response rates vary between 60 percent and 90 percent depending on the position surveyed.

Which professions are surveyed?

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Physicians</li> <li>○ Registered Nurses</li> <li>○ Licensed Practical Nurses</li> <li>○ Dentists</li> <li>○ Dental Hygienists</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Dental Assistants</li> <li>○ Physical Therapists</li> <li>○ Physician Assistants</li> <li>○ Respiratory Care Practitioners</li> <li>○ Chiropractors</li> <li>○ Pharmacists</li> </ul> |
|---|--|

What information do the surveys gather?

- Professional activity.
- Work hours
- Practice location
- Practice setting
- Practice specialty
- Educational background.
- Job tenure
- Practitioner age and gender

For more information about the survey and database, please contact:

**Michael Grover, Senior Health Care Workforce Analyst**  
 Office of Rural Health and Primary Care - Minnesota Department of Health  
 P.O. Box 64975 Saint Paul, Minnesota 55164/(651) 282-5642 michael.grover@health.state.mn.us