

# Minnesota's Physical Therapist (PT) Workforce

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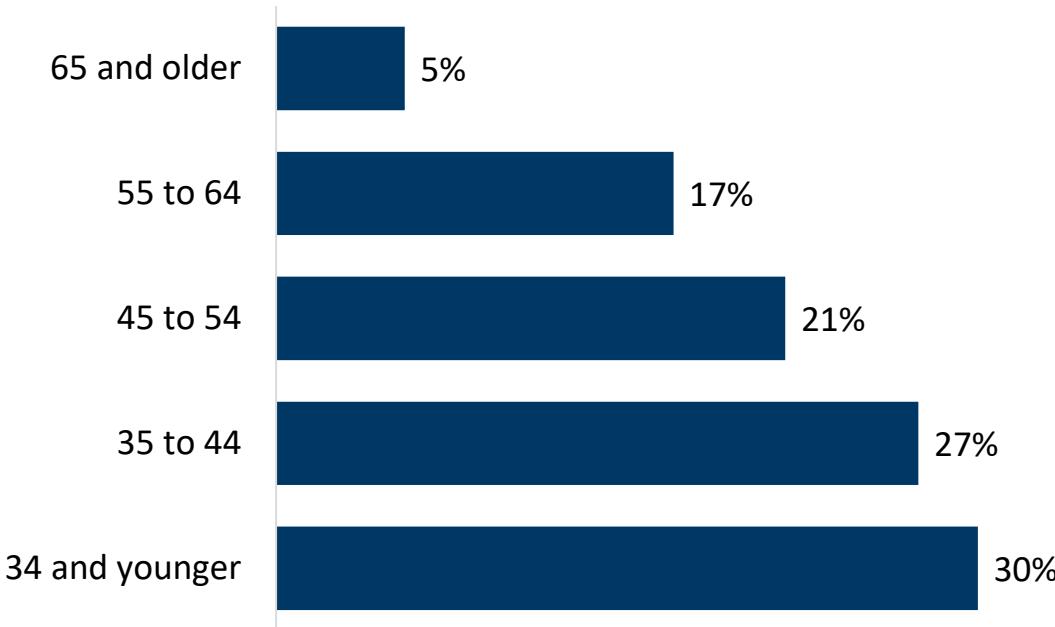
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# Introduction to Minnesota's Physical Therapist Workforce

- According to the Minnesota Board of Physical Therapy, there were **5,451** physical therapists with active licenses in Minnesota as of April, 2018.
- Of the total licensed professionals, 23 percent (or 1,230 physical therapists) listed a practice address that was either outside Minnesota or their address was incomplete. Based on survey responses, we know that 3.2% of the licensees were not working as physical therapists. Thus, not all actively licensed PTs are part of the Minnesota workforce. See more about our [data and methodology](#).
- The physical therapist workforce is relatively young, with a median age of 41. Younger groups of physical therapists entering the profession are larger in size than older groups nearing retirement (see [Slide 4](#)). A majority of physical therapists plan to continue practicing in the profession for at least 10 more years (see [Slide 10](#)).
- The physical therapist workforce is mostly white (see [Slide 5](#)) and the vast majority speak only English in their practice ([Slide 6](#)).
- Roughly half of all physical therapists hold a doctorate degree, which is now the standard educational program offering (see [Slide 7](#)). There are five physical therapist education programs in Minnesota, which reported a total of 273 graduates in 2017, the most recent year for which data were available (see [Slide 8](#)).
- Physical therapists commonly work at either free-standing clinics or hospitals (see [Slide 12](#)). The most commonly reported specialty among physical therapists was orthopedics (see [Slide 11](#)).
- The majority of physical therapists reported high levels of career satisfaction. However, like other types of healthcare providers, physical therapists tend to be more satisfied with their careers overall than with their work in the last 12 months (see [Slide 16](#)).

# Demographics: Sex and Age

Age of Minnesota Physical Therapists



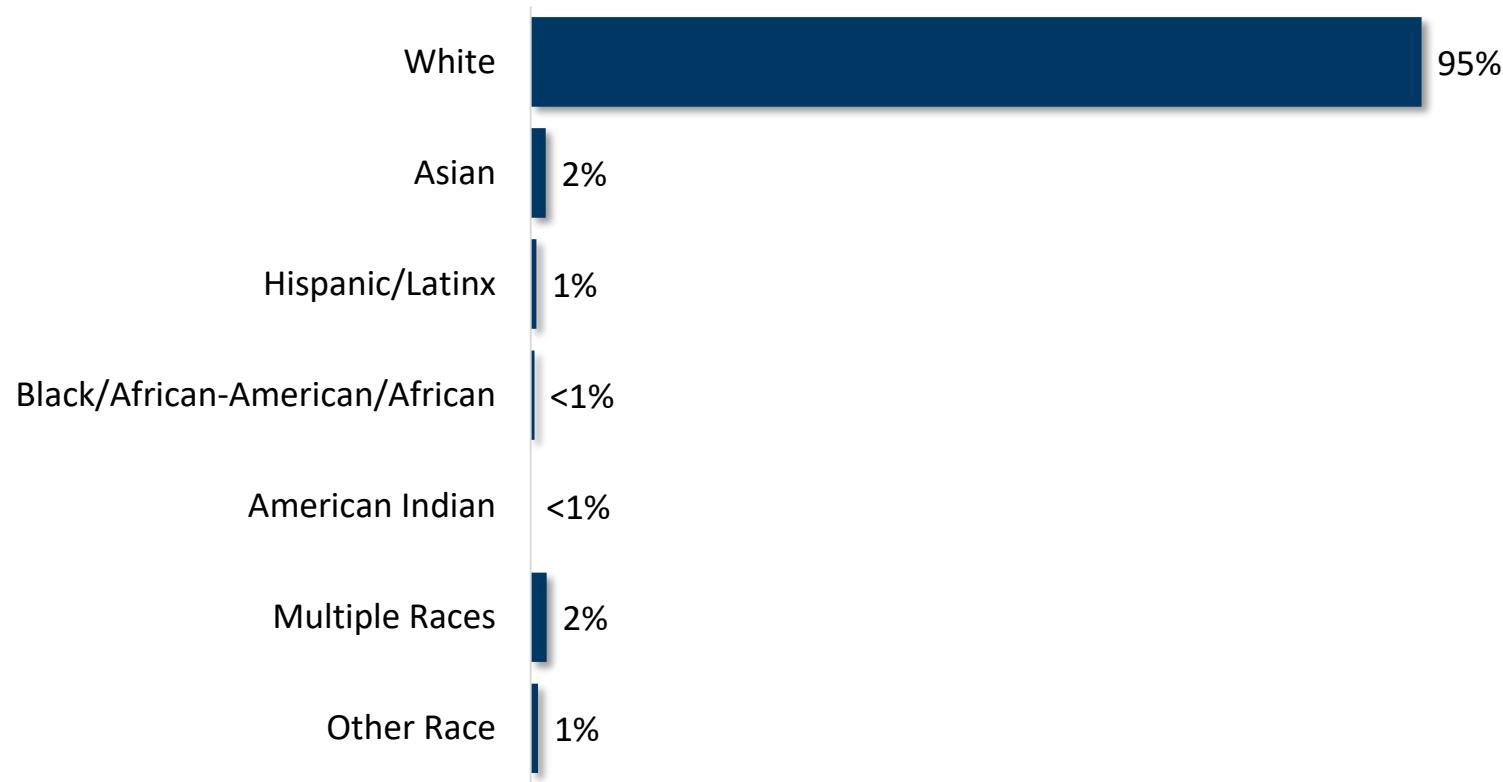
- The median age of physical therapists is 41. As shown above, younger physical therapists are entering the field in sufficient numbers to replace losses the state will see due to retirements.

**Additional information not shown above:**

- With a few exceptions, health care professions are predominantly female, and this is true for physical therapy field as well. Approximately 73 percent of all Minnesota physical therapists are female.

# Demographics: Race and Ethnicity

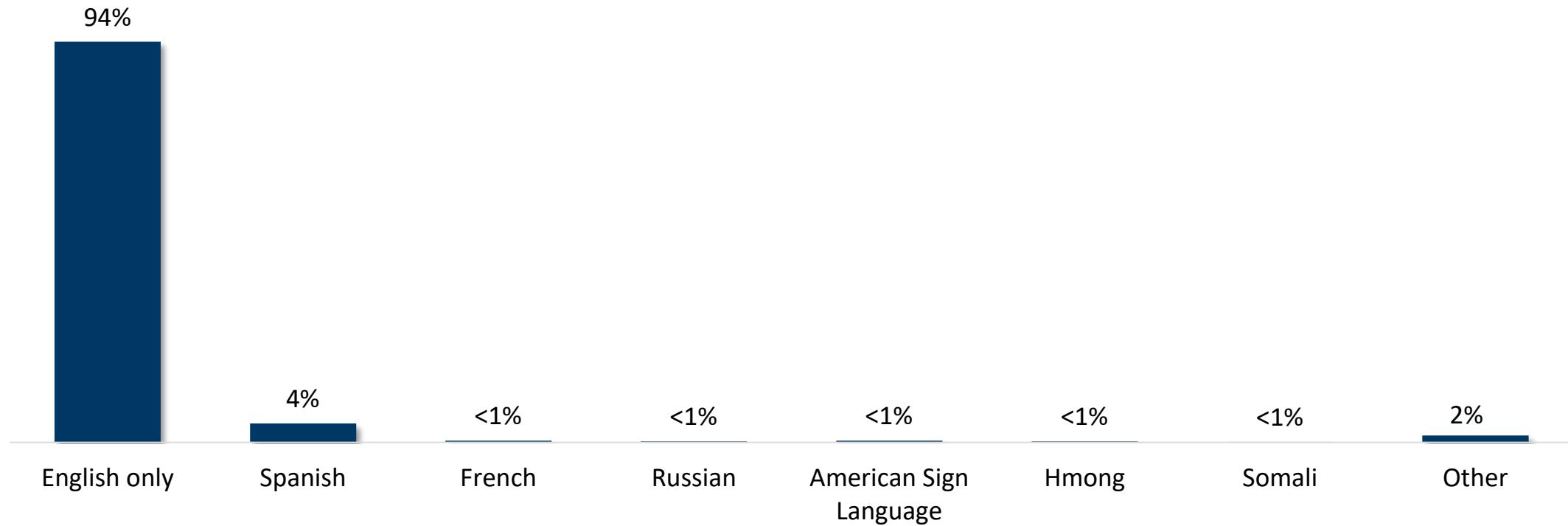
## Race of Minnesota Physical Therapists



- Typical of racial patterns among health care professionals, the majority (94.9 percent) of physical therapists indicated they were white. There were small shares of physical therapists identifying as Asian or multiracial, and even smaller shares identified as American Indian, African American, African or Hispanic.

# Demographics: Languages Spoken in Practice

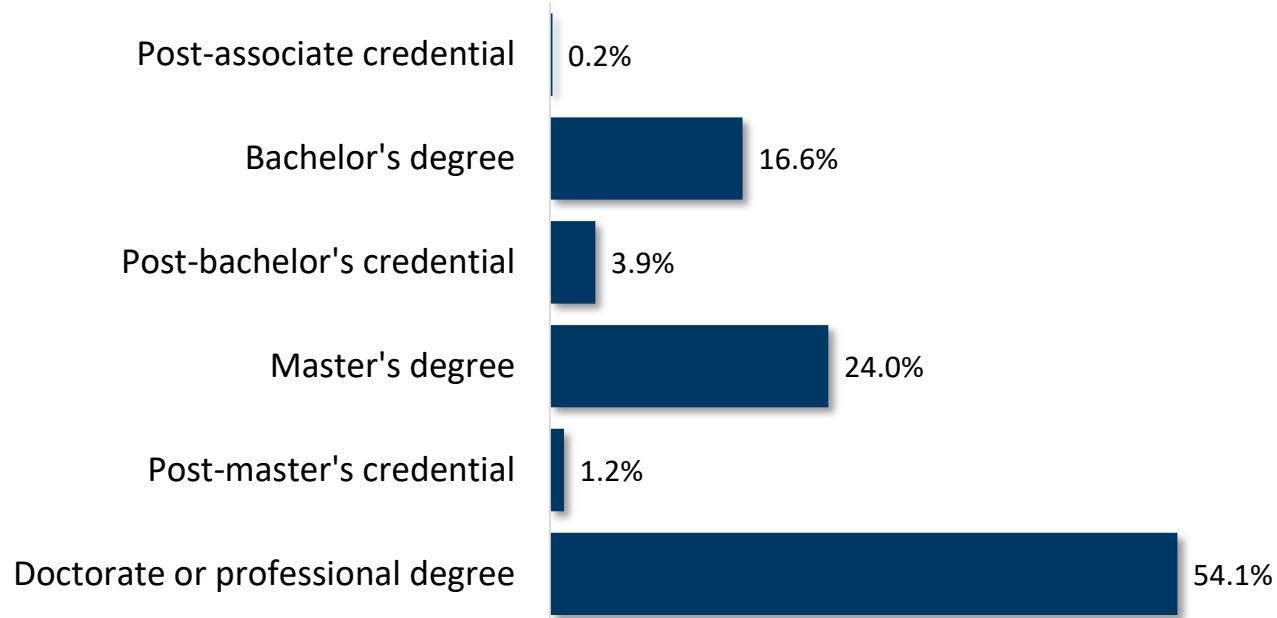
## Languages Spoken by Minnesota Physical Therapists in their Practices



- A majority of physical therapists—approximately 94 percent—spoke only English in their practices. The second most commonly spoken language was Spanish. Very small shares of physical therapists spoke other languages such as French, Vietnamese, Hmong, Somali or American Sign Language with their patients.

Source: MDH Physical Therapist Workforce Questionnaire, 2017. Respondents could select as many languages as applicable, but were instructed **not** to include languages spoken only through an interpreter. The chart is based on 3,637 valid survey responses.

# Education: Educational Attainment



- Just slightly over half of all Minnesota physical therapists have a doctorate or a professional degree, which is now the standard educational program offered. Approximately half of all physical therapists age 35 and under have a doctorate or a professional degree (54 percent). In comparison just eight percent of physical therapists age 45 to 54 have a doctorate or a professional degree.

## Additional information not shown above:

- When asked how likely they were to pursue additional training or credentials to advance in their field, only about 19 percent of physical therapists said they were "very likely to enroll" or were "currently enrolled" in additional training. Among those physical therapists who were currently pursuing or planning to pursue more training, the most commonly-reported types of training included a doctorate in physical therapy; and/or various types of certifications, particularly orthopedics.

# Education: Minnesota Graduates

Physical Therapy Program Graduates, by Institution and Year					
Region	Institution	2015	2016	2017	
Twin Cities	University of Minnesota—Twin Cities	47	51	47	
	St. Catherine's University	33	32	35	
	Concordia University*	-	-	26	
Southeast	Mayo Clinic College of Medicine and Science	28	28	28	
Northeast	College of St. Scholastica	89	122	137	
Total		197	233	273	

- There are currently five physical therapy programs in the state—three in the Twin Cities metro region; one in southeast, and one in northeast Minnesota. In 2015, Minnesota produced 197 new graduates across its five physical therapy programs, and that number has increased each year.

**Additional information not shown above:**

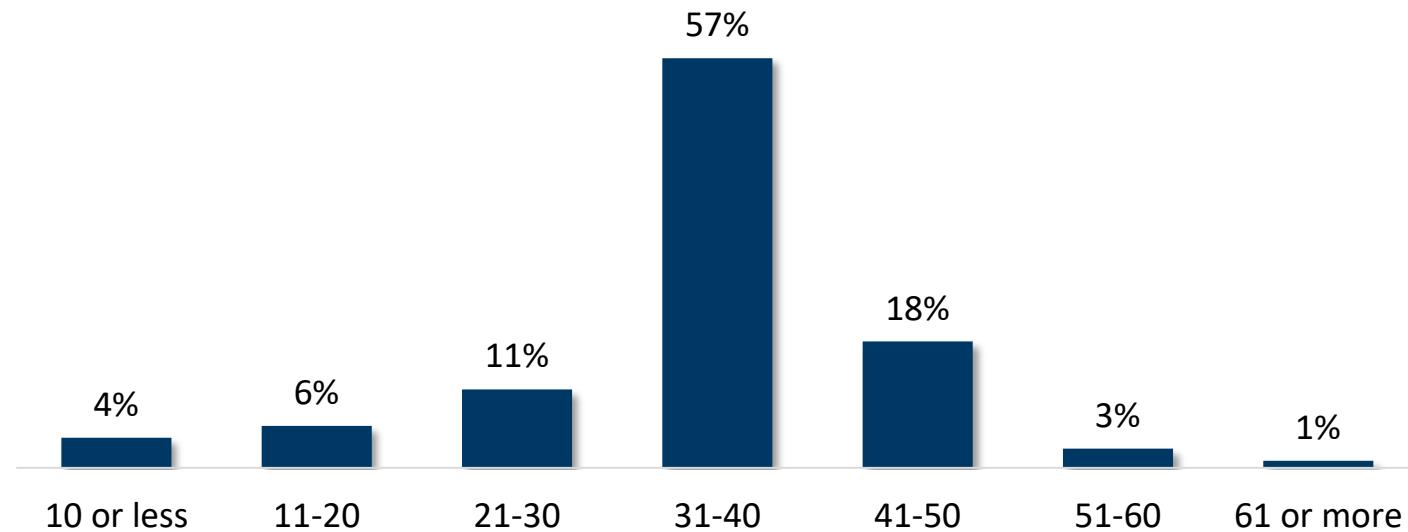
- According to survey findings, approximately half of physical therapists earned their highest degree in Minnesota. An additional 27 percent of all physical therapists were educated in one of Minnesota's four border states—Iowa, North Dakota, South Dakota or Wisconsin.

Source: National Center of Education Statistics, Integrated Postsecondary Educational Data System (IPEDS). Accessed via the Minnesota Office of Higher Education website.

\*Concordia University graduated its first class in 2017.

# Employment: Employment & Hours Worked

## Hours Worked in a Typical Week



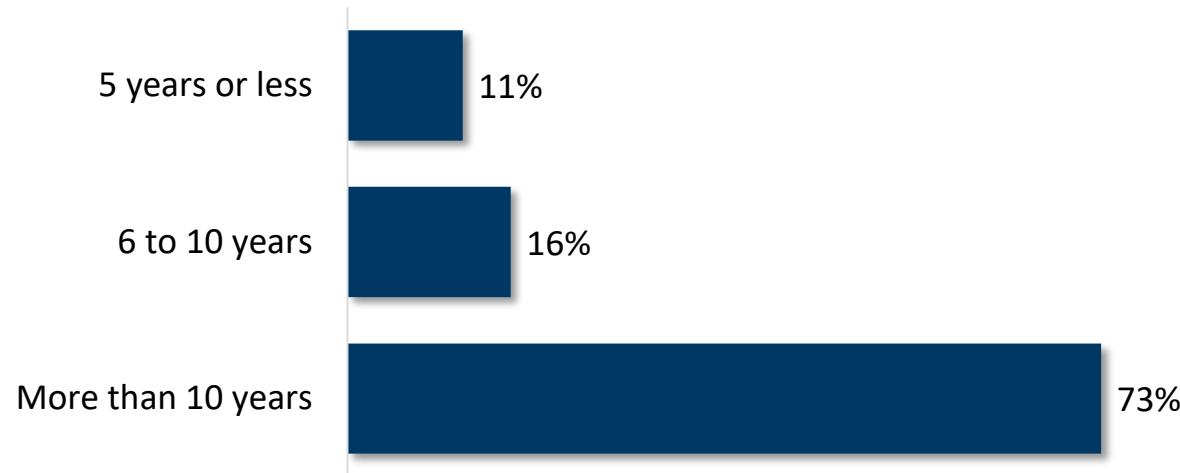
- The median work week for physical therapists was 40 hours, and just over half of all physical therapists worked between 31 and 40 hours per week. A relatively small proportion of physical therapists (21 percent) worked 30 hours or fewer.

### Additional information not shown above:

- An estimated **97 percent** of Minnesota licensed physical therapists reported on the MDH questionnaire that they were “working in a paid or unpaid position related to [their] license.” In addition, physical therapists spent the majority of their time caring for patients: 76 percent reported they spent more than three-quarters of their time providing direct patient care.

# Employment: Future Plans

**“How long do you plan to continue practicing as a physical therapist in Minnesota?”**



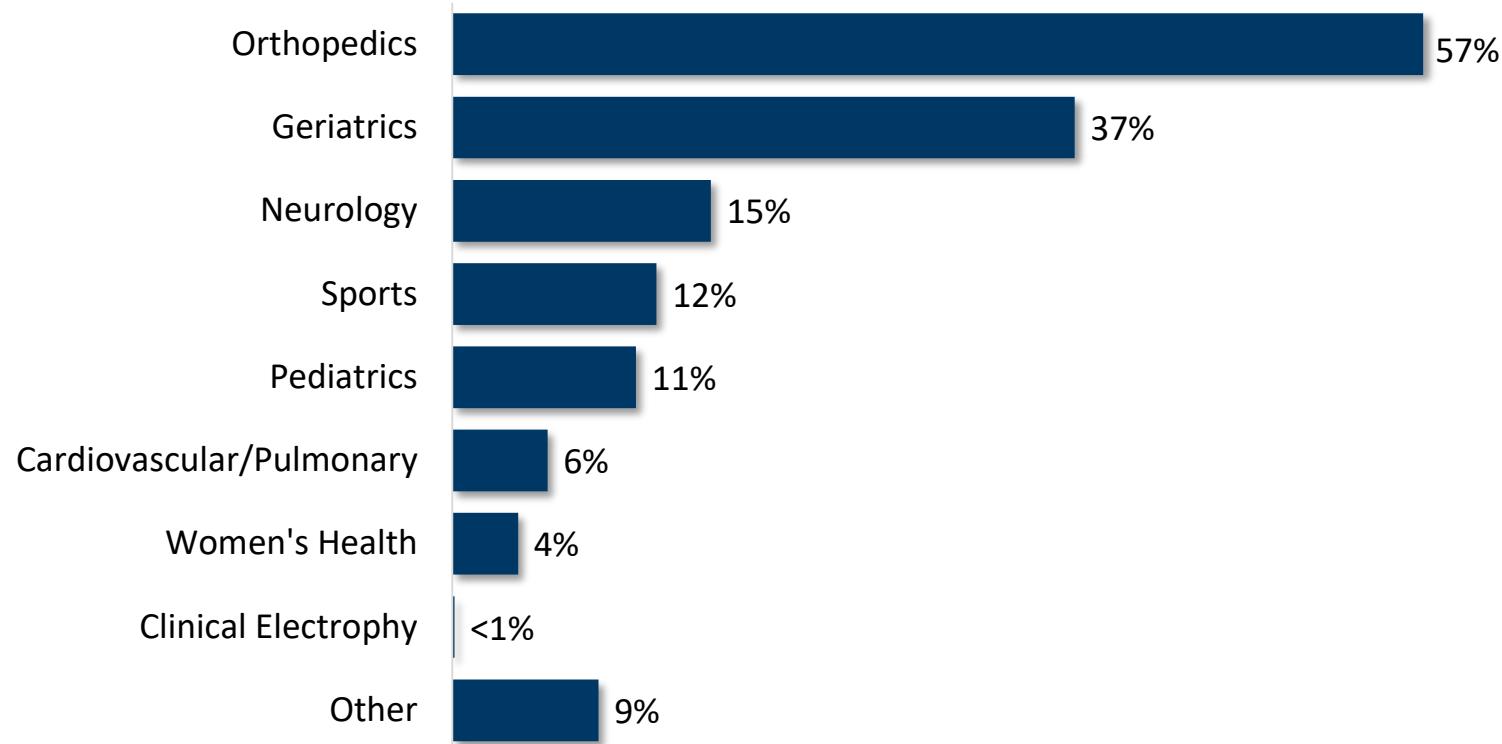
- Just 11 percent of Minnesota physical therapists indicated that they planned to leave the field within five years. The majority, 73 percent of physical therapists planned to remain in the field for more than ten more years.

**Additional information not shown above:**

- Among the small sub-group who said they planned to leave within five years, the majority (86 percent) said they intend to retire. Four percent planned to leave the field due to burnout or dissatisfaction, and another three percent said they planned to pursue training to advance in their current or a related profession.

# Physical Therapists at Work: Specialties

Physical Therapists' Specialties



- The survey asked physical therapists to identify all the specialties they practiced. As shown above, the single most commonly reported specialty was orthopedics, with 57 percent of physical therapists identifying this as their specialty.
- Almost 10 percent of physical therapists reported that they had another specialty not included in the selection list. Based on open-ended responses, physical therapists' most common "other" specialties included acute care; general therapy; oncology rehab and wound care; and workplace injury.

# Physical Therapists at Work: Work Settings

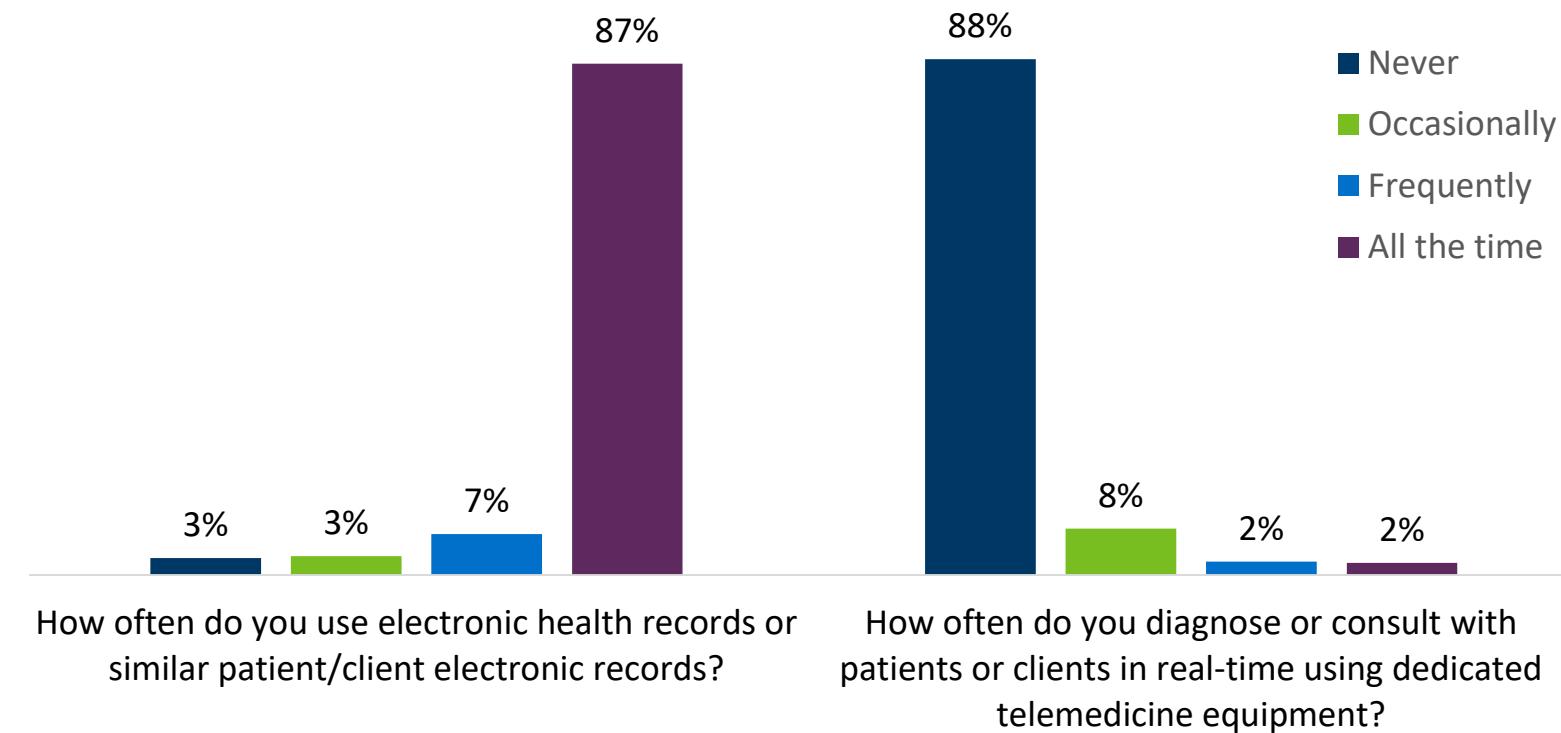
Primary Work Setting	Share of PTs Working in this Setting
Clinic/Professional Office/Health Center/Ambulatory Care	50.5%
Hospital	21.6%
Long-Term Care Facility	10.5%
Home Health Care	7.8%
Academic (Teaching/Research)	2.6%
School (K-12)	2.0%
Community/Faith-Based Organization	0.8%
Insurance/Benefits Management Organization	0.5%
State, County, or City Agency	0.1%
Correctional Facility	0.1%
Other	3.6%

- The survey asked physical therapists to identify their primary work setting. Nearly three-fourths of Minnesota's physical therapists work in either a traditional clinic or a hospital setting. Smaller shares (10 percent and under) work in settings such as long-term health care facilities, home health care, or academic environments.

Source: MDH Physical Therapist Workforce Questionnaire, 2017. The survey includes questions on both the "primary" and "secondary" settings in which providers work. For the purposes of the analysis in this section, we present data only on the setting physical therapist reported as their "primary" setting. An analysis of PTs' work settings indicates that the types of settings in which PTs worked did not differ depending on whether they were primary or secondary.

# Physical Therapists at Work: EHRs and Telemedicine

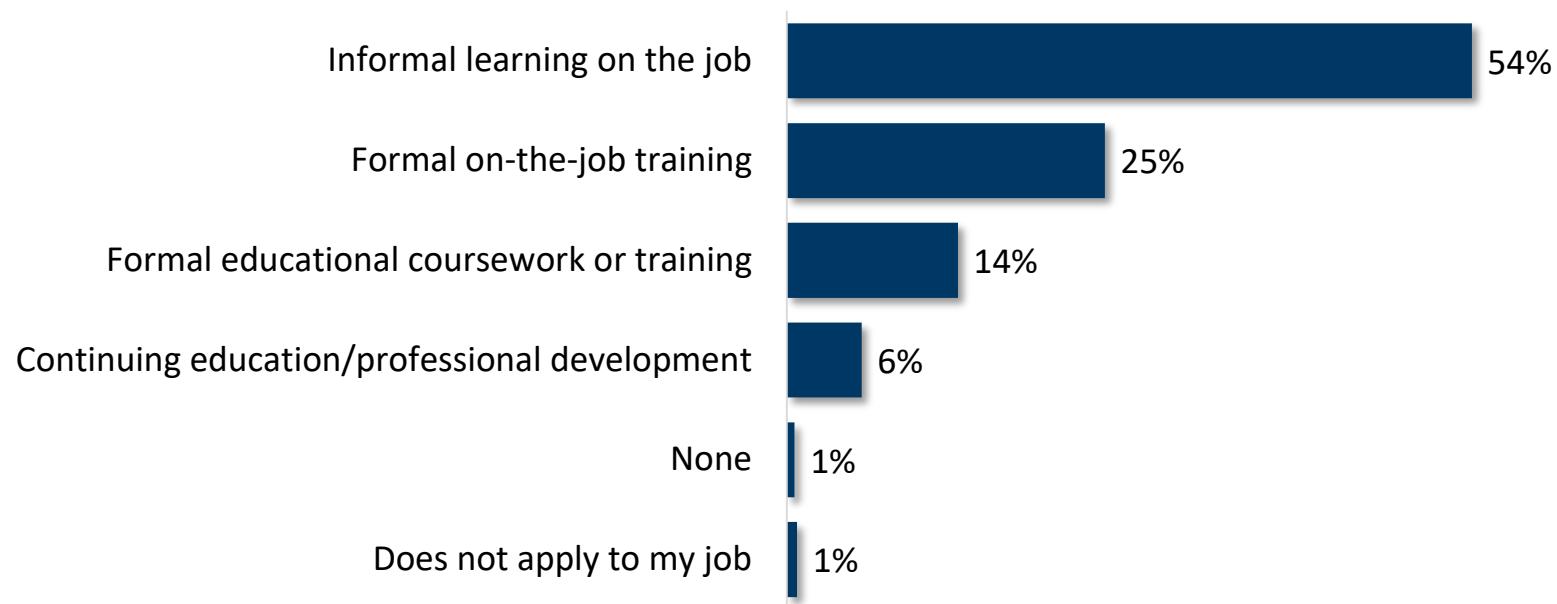
## PTs' Use of Electronic Health Records and Telemedicine Equipment



- The 2017 survey included items about the use of both electronic health records and dedicated telemedicine equipment. The results showed that the vast majority of physical therapists use electronic health records “all the time,” but most do not use telemedicine equipment regularly to diagnose or treat patients.

# Physical Therapists at Work: Teamwork

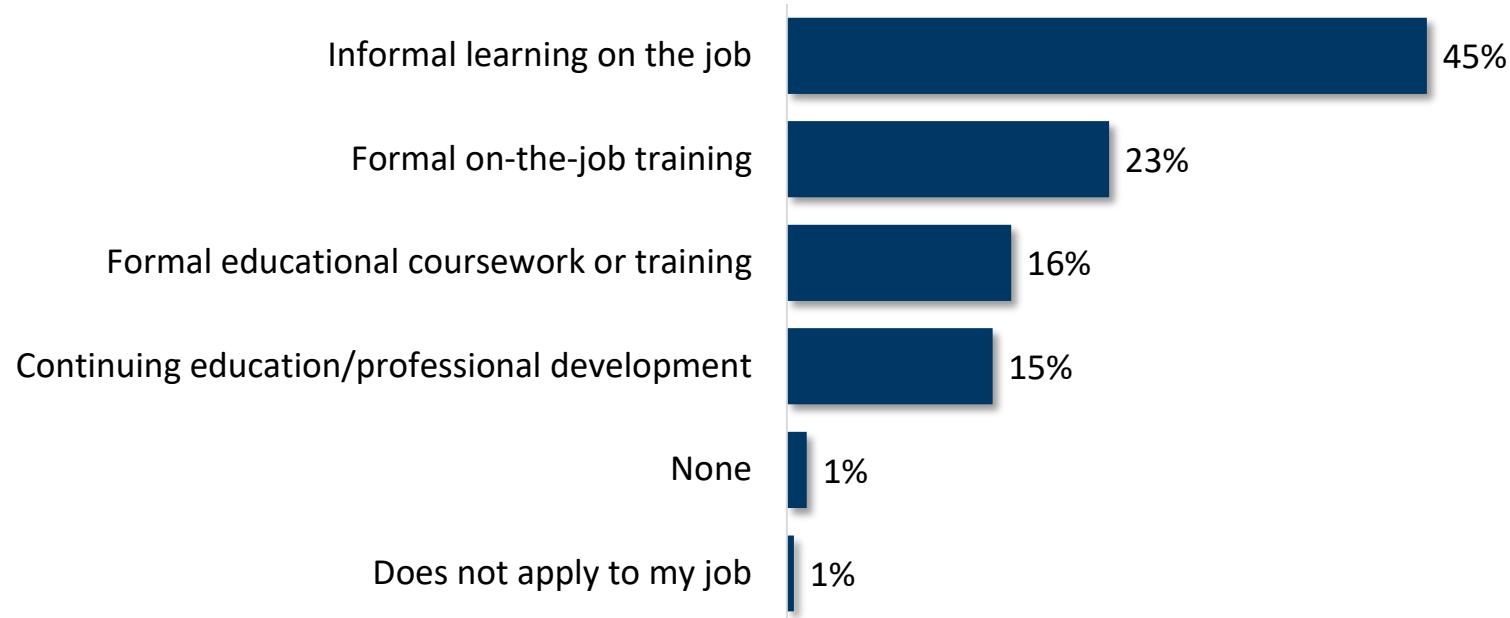
**“Which of the following work or educational experiences best prepared you to work in a multidisciplinary team when providing care?”**



- Health care providers increasingly work in multidisciplinary teams, prompting educators and health policymakers to ask how best to train providers to communicate and coordinate across professions. MDH included a question on its 2017 survey to shed light on these issues. As shown above, more than half of all physical therapists reported that informal learning on the job *best* prepared them to work in multidisciplinary teams, with another 25 percent reporting that formal on-the-job training prepared them best.

# Physical Therapists at Work: Cultural Competence

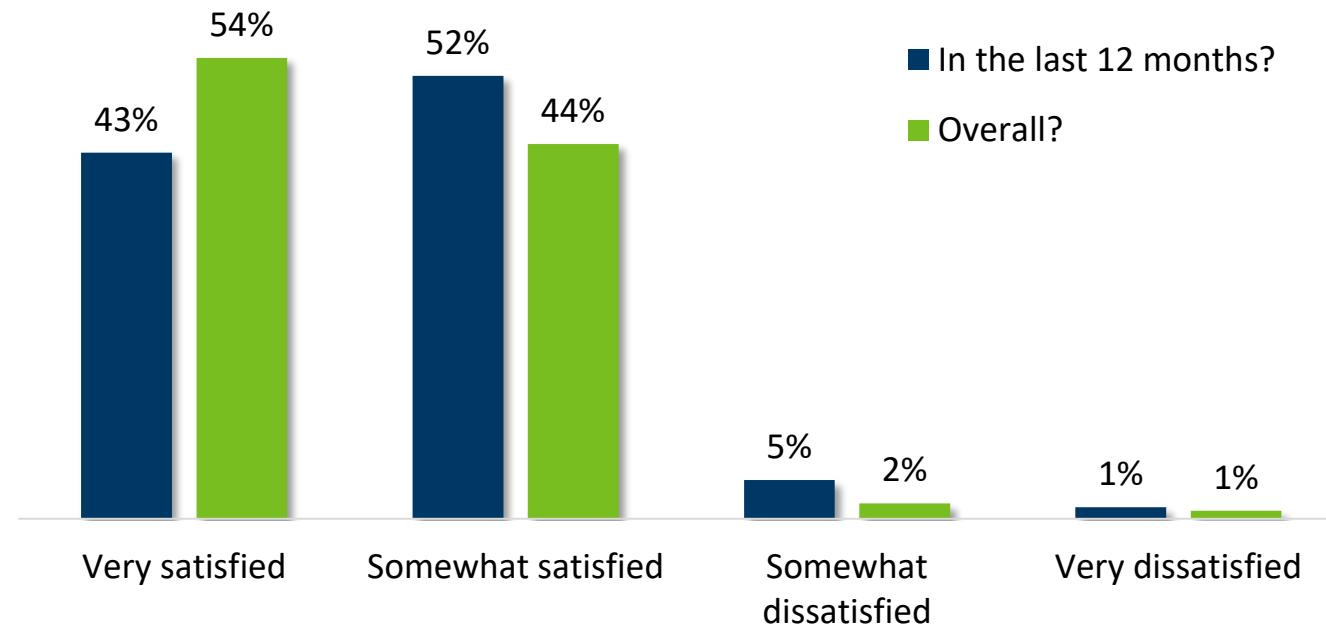
**“Which of the following work or educational experiences best prepared you to provide culturally competent care?”**



- The survey also included questions about the best way to prepare the health care workforce to provide “culturally competent” care. As shown physical therapists again most commonly indicated that formal or informal learning *on the job* (as opposed to coursework or continuing education) provided the best preparation for working with diverse groups of patients.

# Physical Therapists at Work: Career Satisfaction

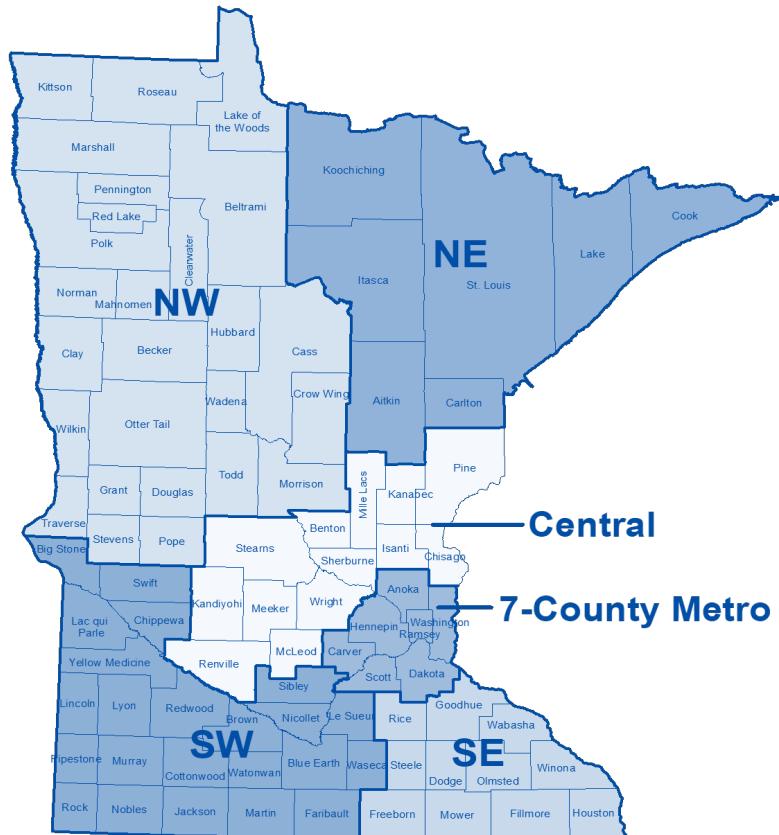
How satisfied have you been with your career....



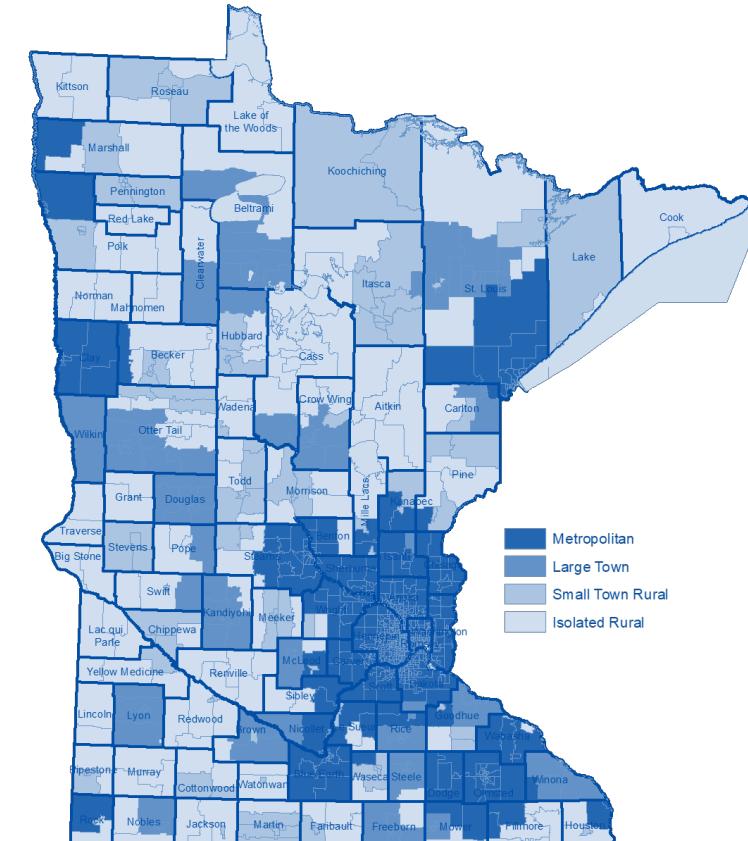
- The 2017 survey included questions on career satisfaction in the past 12 months and overall. As shown above, the majority of physical therapists indicated that they were either “somewhat satisfied” or “very satisfied,” both in the past 12 months and overall. Physical therapists were slightly more likely to report being very satisfied with their career overall compared to the last 12 months—a trend typical among health care professionals for which work satisfaction data is available. This is consistent with national findings which suggest that the increase in administrative work—such as dealing with billing, insurance, and electronic medical records—has dampened work satisfaction among health care providers.
- Almost all physical therapists shared that having a beneficial impact on their patients’ daily lives brought the greatest professional satisfaction. However, many shared that administrative issues such as paperwork, insurance, and other documentation were their greatest sources of dissatisfaction in their career.

# Geographic Distribution: Two ways to present geography

By state planning areas



By rural-urban commuting regions (RUCAs)



Source: Minnesota Department of Health  
Developed by the Health Resources and Services Administration's  
United States Department of Agriculture, Economic Research Service and  
WWAMI Rural Health Research Center at the University of Washington.

For more information:

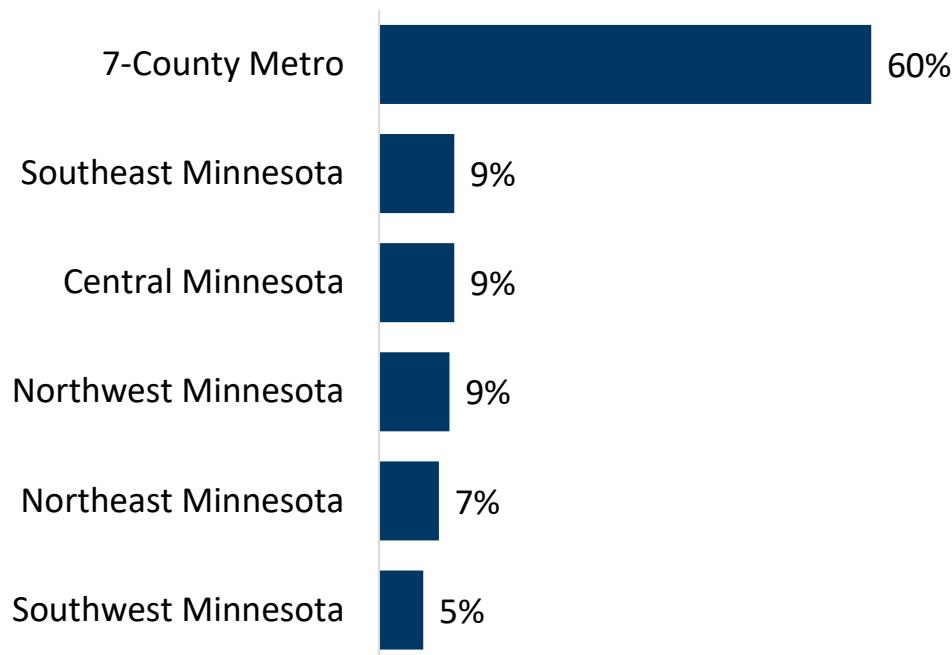
[Minnesota Employment and Economic Development Planning Areas](#)

For more information:

[Minnesota Department of Health RUCA](#)

# Geographic Distribution: by Planning Area

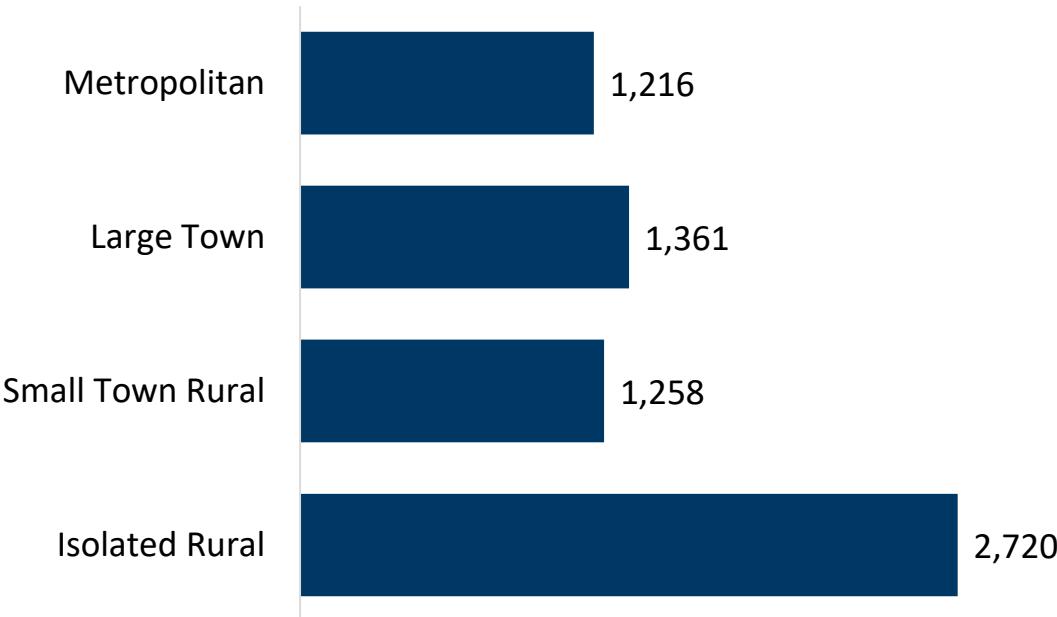
Share of Physical Therapists by State Planning Area



- The largest share of physical therapists practice in the 7-county metro area (60 percent). Conversely, the smallest share practices in the southwest region of the state. The remaining regions employ similar shares of Minnesota's physical therapist workforce, with almost ten percent in each.

# Geographic Distribution: by Rurality

Minnesota Population-to-Physical Therapist Ratio, by Level of Rurality



- The chart above provides another view of the geographic distribution of physical therapists, showing the share of the population for every one physical therapist in metropolitan areas, large towns, small towns, and isolated rural areas. As shown, there are 1,216 people for every one physical therapist in metropolitan areas, compared to over twice that in the most rural areas of the state. This pattern is typical of other health care professions, and reflects the relative inaccessibility of physical therapists care in sparsely populated areas of Minnesota.

# Methodology

The data in this report come from two sources:

- The **Minnesota Board of Physical Therapy (BPT)** provides data on the entire population of physical therapists who have active licenses in the state of Minnesota. The BPT maintains this database primarily for administrative purposes. BPT provides the data to the Minnesota Department of Health, Office of Rural Health and Primary Care (MDH-ORHPC). This report uses data current as of April, 2018. At that time, there were a total of **5,451** physical therapists with active Minnesota licenses, approximately 77 percent of whom indicated that their primary business address was in Minnesota. Analysts at the Minnesota Department of Health-Office of Rural Health and Primary Care clean organize, clean, and geocode addresses that come from the survey, which is how we can identify practice locations (shown in Slides 18 and 19).
- The **2017 Minnesota Department of Health-Office of Rural Health and Primary Care (MDH-ORHPC) Physical Therapist Workforce Survey** collects additional demographic and workforce data from physical therapists. MDH-ORHPC administered the survey to all physical therapists who renewed their Minnesota license in the calendar year of 2017. The response rate was 95.8 percent.
- See the ORHPC website for more details about the methodology ([www.health.state.mn.us/data/workforce/method.html](http://www.health.state.mn.us/data/workforce/method.html))

# Notes

Visit our website at  
<http://www.health.state.mn.us/divs/orhpc/workforce/reports.html>  
to learn more about the Minnesota health care workforce.

County-level data for this profession is available at  
<http://www.health.state.mn.us/divs/orhpc/workforce/database/>

**Minnesota Department of Health  
Office of Rural Health and Primary Care  
85 East 7<sup>th</sup> Place, Suite 220  
Saint Paul, MN 55117  
(651) 201-3838  
[health.orhpc@state.mn.us](mailto:health.orhpc@state.mn.us)**

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