

Workforce: New Research Shows Hiring Challenges Continue for Outpatient Physical Therapy Clinics Amid Growth



The American Physical Therapy Association's third annual workforce report finds that the physical therapy profession faces ongoing hiring challenges.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
October 16, 2024

Contact: Sara E. Shannon
sarashannon@apta.org

Alexandria, VA – October 16, 2024 – The American Physical Therapy Association and APTA Private Practice, a specialty section of the association, have released the third annual survey of outpatient physical therapy facilities, shedding light on key hiring and workforce trends. The report, titled "[APTA Benchmark Report: Hiring Challenges in Outpatient Physical Therapy Practices, 2024](#)," underscores the persistent difficulty outpatient clinics face in maintaining an adequate workforce to meet the demand for PT services despite the waning influence of the COVID-19 pandemic on the health care workforce.

"This 2024 report is a critical resource for our members as it highlights both the growth and challenges our profession faces in maintaining a sufficient workforce," said APTA President Roger Herr, PT, MPA. "As the US population grows and ages, the need for physical therapist services continues to rise. It is vital we address staffing challenges at outpatient practices head-on. APTA remains committed to exploring comprehensive solutions to expand the supply for physical therapist services."

According to the report, the physical therapy labor market remains robust for job seekers but presents challenges for employers as the industry grows. From 2023 to 2024, outpatient physical therapy practices reported increases in both the number of employees and job openings, reflecting overall industry growth but also revealing significant hiring hurdles.

Some of the report's most notable findings include:

- The national vacancy rate for outpatient physical therapy practices, based on survey results that provided data for the report, stands at **9.5%**, nearly double the U.S. national average vacancy rate for all industries of **4.8%** reported by the Bureau of Labor Statistics.
- There was an overall **2.1%** growth in total job openings from 2023 to 2024, with specific increases of **3.2%** for physical therapists and **17.2%** for physical therapist assistants.
- Approximately **13%** of all physical therapist and physical therapist assistant positions at outpatient practices are open.
- **Company growth** was identified as the most frequent driver of current position openings, followed by openings created by employee turnover due to **relocation, better pay opportunities elsewhere**, and **work-life balance** concerns.

"This latest report on employment vacancies highlights the ongoing demand for physical therapists and physical therapist assistants and provides valuable insights to help practice owners and managers navigate staffing challenges," stated Mike Horsfield, PT, MPT, president of APTA Private Practice, a Section of the American Physical Therapy Association. "This report also serves as a vital resource for those seeking employment to better understand the hiring environment. We will continue to track these trends to benefit private practices and professionals nationwide."

For more detailed information, read the [APTA Benchmark Report: Hiring Challenges in Outpatient Physical Therapy Practices, 2024](#).

###

The American Physical Therapy Association represents more than 100,000 physical therapists, physical therapist assistants, and physical therapy students nationwide. Visit apta.org to learn more.

APTA Private Practice comprises almost 4,000 physical therapists nationwide who own, operate, or work in a private practice setting. We are a component of APTA and our mission is to champion the success of the physical therapist in business.