

# Physical Therapy Trends in North Dakota: 2023

Findings from the Minimum Data Set

January 2023

## **Introduction**

A minimum data set (MDS) of Physical Therapist (PT) and Physical Therapist Assistant (PTA) licensure information was obtained for analysis from the North Dakota Board of Physical Therapy. The MDS information was captured at three separate time periods. These time periods were between October 1, 2017, and January 31, 2018, between October 1, 2019 and January 31, 2021, and between October 1, 2021, and January 31, 2022. The data sets contained information on provider characteristics and provider practice characteristics. The data sets contained MDS information for 1,005 licensees from 2018, 1,098 licensees in 2020, and 1,192 licensees in 2022. When examining the number of licensed physical therapists employed as a PT, there were 803 (95.9%) in 2018, 878 (94.3%) in 2020, and 947 (93.5%) in 2022. When examining the number of licensed physical therapist assistants employed as a PTA, there were 148 (88.1%) in 2018, 148 (88.6%) in 2020, and 155 (86.6%) in 2022. The remaining physical therapists and physical therapist assistants reported employment status in another field, unemployed, or retired. The following summary is limited to those PTs and PTAs who were working in physical therapy at the time of licensure for each respective year.

## **Licensed Individuals and Study Selection**

### **Demographics**

The demographic characteristics of gender and race/ethnicity were collected for the minimum data set. Gender was analyzed as a dichotomous variable of male/female while responses of 'prefer not to answer' were excluded from the analysis due to the small sample size. Race/ethnicity was analyzed as a dichotomous variable of white/non-white while race/ethnicities other than white were grouped due to small sample sizes.

#### *Gender*

All years examined had a higher representation of female PTs and PTAs over males, with a relatively stable proportion found for each year with 73.2% in 2018, 71.9% in 2020, and 72.1% in 2022. When the gender distribution was examined for PTs and PTAs separately, there was miniscule changes in female PTs each year with 70.9%, 69.9%, and 70.3% for each respective year. When examining PTAs, there was a declining trend of majority female PTAs each year with 84.5%, 82.4%, and 81.9% female for each respective year.

#### *Race/Ethnicity*

A majority of PTs and PTAs for all years examined were found to be white, with a stable trend of 95.6% in 2018, 95.7% in 2020, and 94.7% in 2022. When race was examined for PTs and PTAs separately, there was a stable yet slightly declining trend of white PTs with 95.8%, 95.8%, and 94.9% of PTs for each respective year. When examining PTAs, there was a similar stable yet slightly declining trend as well with 94.6%, 95.3%, and 93.6% white for each respective year. Overall, less than 1% of providers in any year identified as Hispanic or Latino.

### **Education**

The characteristics of educational attainment, school state, and year of graduation were collected for the MDS. Educational degree attainment was analyzed at all collected levels along with the country of origin and U.S. state of the school.

### *Educational Attainment*

A majority of PTAs for all years examined have an Associate’s degree, with 97.3% in 2018, 98% in 2020, and 95.5% in 2022. A majority of PTs for all years collected had a Doctor of Physical Therapy degree, with 54.8% in 2018, 60.4% in 2020, and 66.3% in 2022. This was followed by a declining trend of PTs having a Master’s degree, with 25.5%, 23.7%, and 20.2% for each respective year.

Table 1: Educational Attainment for North Dakota Physical Therapists and Physical Therapist Assistants

	<b>PT</b>		<b>PTA</b>		<b>Total</b>	
	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>
Certificate	6	0.6%	1	0.7%	5	0.0%
Associate's	0	0.0%	148	95.5%	145	0.1%
Bachelor's	122	12.9%	5	3.2%	137	0.1%
Master's	191	20.2%	1	0.7%	208	0.2%
Doctor of Physical Therapy	628	66.3%	0	0.0%	531	0.5%
<b>All</b>	<b>947</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>155</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>1026</b>	<b>1.0%</b>

### *State or Country of Education*

A majority of all PTs and PTAs, for all years examined, graduated from a school in North Dakota with 71.7% in 2018, 74.6% in 2020, and 74.3% in 2022. When education was examined for PTs and PTAs separately, there was an increasing trend of PTs graduating from a school in North Dakota with 78%, 81.8%, and 81.6% of PTs for each respective year. When examining PTAs, there was a decreasing trend of PTAs who graduated from a school in North Dakota with 37.8%, 32.4%, and 29.7% for each respective year. The declining trend for in-state PTAs is expected as the State has been without an accredited PTA program for quite some time.

### *Number of Years Since Graduation*

The variable graduation year was recoded into the number of years since graduation by subtracting the graduation year from each subsequent MDS collection year. When examining PTs and PTAs combined, the average number of years since graduation was found to be 14.8 in 2018, 14.6 in 2020, and 14.7 in 2022. When years since graduation were examined for PTs and PTAs separately, there was a stable trend of years since graduation for PTs with 15.2, 14.9, and 15.0 for each respective year. When examining PTAs, there was a slightly increasing trend of 12.3, 12.9, and 13.2 for each respective year.

### **Practice Characteristics**

The practice characteristics of primary workplace, primary workplace setting, work percentage, employment status, telehealth, city of primary practice, the rural-urban status of the primary workplace, primary patient ages, and future plans were collected for the MDS. The primary workplace was summarized to the general workplace type to condense the category combinations found to be more generalizable, as well as to prevent reporting uniquely identifiable providers. Rural-urban status was obtained by adding the Rural-Urban Commuting Area (RUCA) codes to each primary workplace ZIP code and aggregating them into rural and urban. The primary workplace setting was summarized at the collected levels. The primary workplace setting was a multiple-response variable where providers could

select one or more options. Of all PTs and PTAs actively working in physical therapy, a majority reported only one employer for the year examined with 84.5% in 2018, 85.3% in 2020, and 86.1% in 2022.

*Primary Workplace*

A majority of all PTs and PTAs responding to the mandatory MDS survey practice in an outpatient setting, with 50.8% in 2018, 54.0% in 2020, and 55.6% in 2022. When primary workplace was examined for PTs and PTAs separately, there was an increasing trend of outpatient workplaces for PTs with 54.9%, 58.0%, and 59.0% for each respective year. When examining PTAs, there was an increasing trend of 28.4%, 30.4%, and 34.8% for each respective year.

Table 2: Primary Workplace for North Dakota Physical Therapists and Physical Therapist Assistants

	<b>PT</b>		<b>PTA</b>		<b>Total</b>	
	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>
Academic Institution (post secondary)	41	4.3%	0	0.0%	41	3.3%
Acute Care Hospital	76	8.0%	11	7.1%	87	7.0%
Home Care	52	5.5%	8	5.2%	60	5.8%
Inpatient Rehabilitation Facility	16	1.7%	10	6.5%	26	2.5%
Industry	1	0.1%	0	0.0%	1	0.1%
Non-patient care or non-clinical environment related to physical therapy	11	1.2%	0	0.0%	11	1.1%
Outpatient Clinic affiliated with a hospital, health system, military, or other government agency	313	33.1%	37	23.9%	350	32.6%
Outpatient Clinic not affiliated with a hospital, health system, military, or other government agency	246	26.0%	17	11.0%	263	21.4%
Pediatric Clinic (non-school based)	47	5.0%	4	2.6%	51	3.3%
Skilled Nursing Facility, Long Term Care Facility, Assisted Living Facility, or Group Home	76	8.0%	56	36.1%	132	14.1%
School System	26	2.8%	8	5.2%	34	3.7%
Other	42	4.4%	4	2.6%	46	5.1%
<b>All</b>	<b>947</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>155</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>1,102</b>	<b>100%</b>

*Work Percentage*

A majority of work time for all PTs and PTAs examined was attributed to direct patient care, with 84.1% in 2018, 83.2% in 2020, and 82.7% in 2022. When work percentage was examined for PTs and PTAs separately, there was a slight decrease in time attributed to direct patient care for PTs with 83.0%, 82.7%, and 81.7% for each respective year. When examining PTAs, there was a varied trend in work percentage attributed to direct patient care with 90.1%, 82.7%, and 89.2% for each respective year.

*Employment Status*

A majority of PTs and PTAs examined are employed by an employer, with 91.2% in 2018, 90.9% in 2020, and 90.0% in 2022. When employment was examined for PTs and PTAs separately, there was a

slight decrease in employment with an employer for PTs with 89.9%, 89.6%, and 88.5% for each respective year. When examining PTAs, there was a slight increase in the percentage of those employed with an employer with 98.0%, 98.6%, and 98.7% for each respective year.

*Telehealth*

A majority of PTs and PTAs did not conduct any of their work through telehealth or telemedicine, with 99.0% in 2018, 98.2% in 2020, and 86.3% in 2022 not providing telehealth services. When telehealth was examined for PTs and PTAs separately, there was a large increase in the use of telehealth reported in 2022 for PTs with 1.1%, 1.7%, and 15.3% for each respective year. When examining PTAs, there was a minimal variation in telehealth with 1.1%, 1.6%, and 1.8% for each respective year.

*Rural-Urban Status of Primary Workplace*

Table 3: Rural-Urban Status of Primary Workplace for North Dakota Physical Therapists and Physical Therapist Assistants

	<b>PT</b>		<b>PTA</b>		<b>Total</b>	
	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>
Urban	629	66.8%	79	51.0%	708	0.6%
Large/Small/Isolated Rural	313	33.2%	76	49.0%	389	0.4%
<b>All</b>	<b>942</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>155</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>1097</b>	<b>100%</b>

*City of Primary Workplace*

The ZIP code of primary practice was used to determine city of practice. Figure 1, below, displays primary city workplace for PTs and PTAs. The values after city names indicate the total number of PTs and PTAs for each city.

Figure 1: Primary Workplace City for North Dakota Physical Therapists and Rate of Physical Therapists Per 10,000 Population

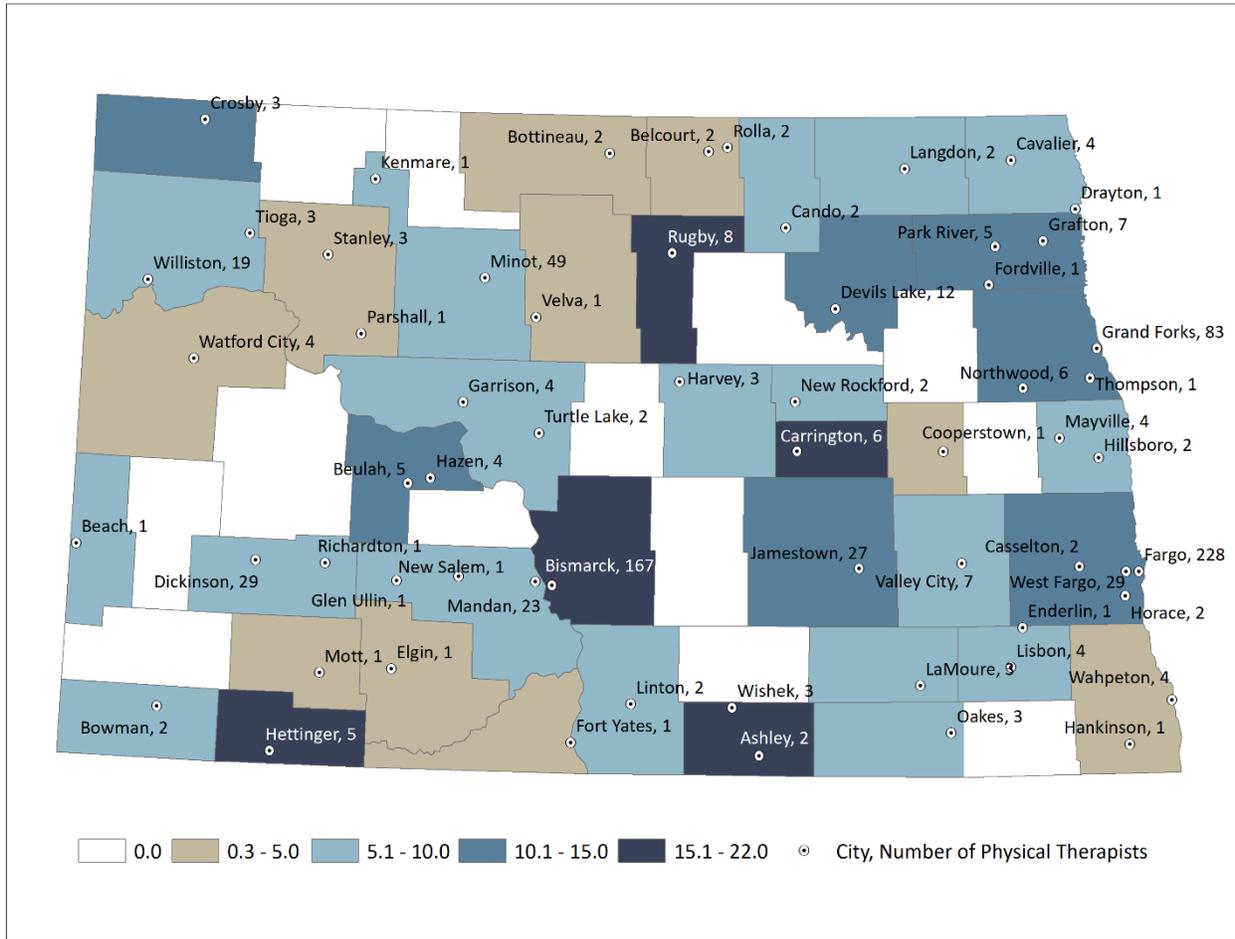
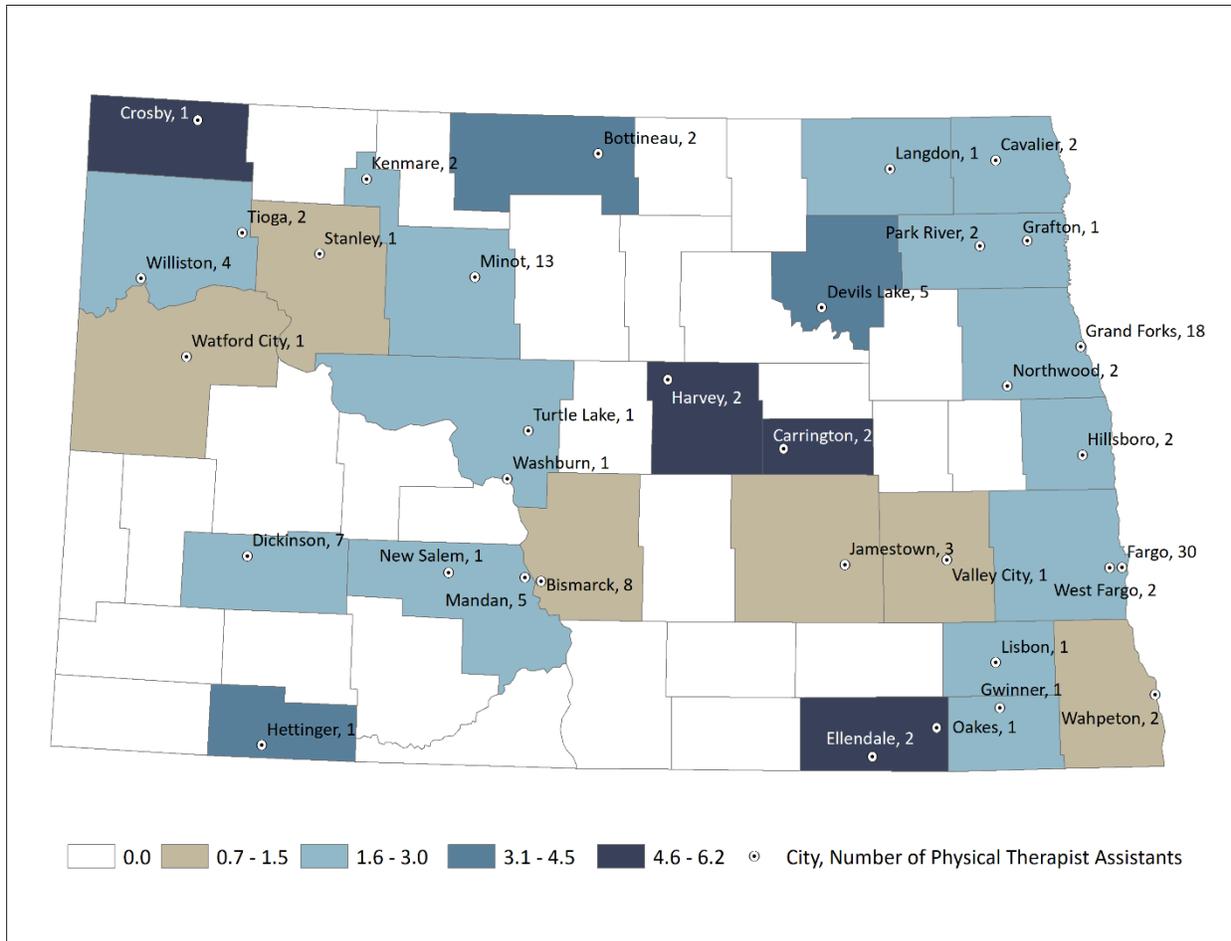


Figure 2: Primary Workplace City for North Dakota Physical Therapist Assistants and Rate of Physical Therapist Assistants Per 10,000 Population

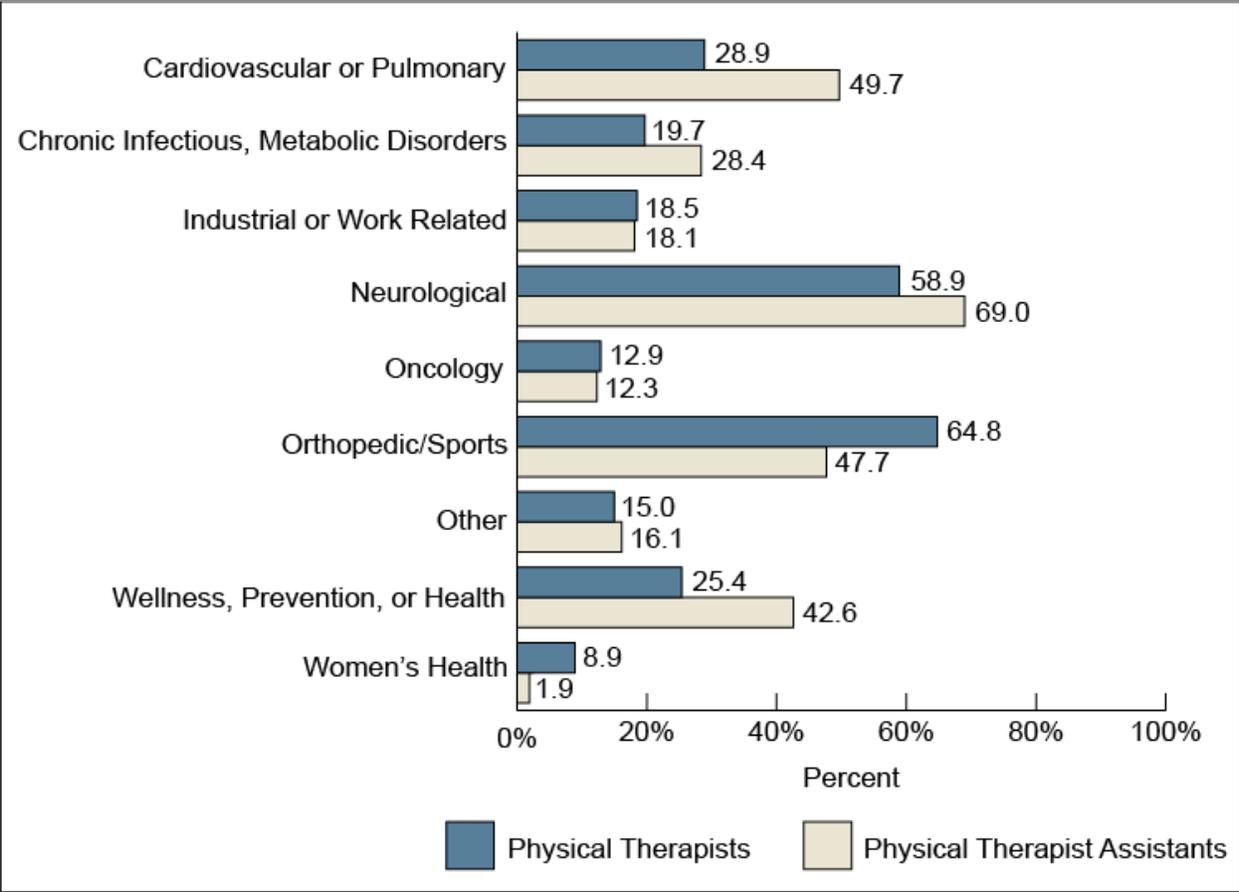


*Primary Types of Injuries or Conditions*

The variable of primary types of injuries or conditions had the potential for multiple responses, as such the reported percentages add up to greater than 100%. A majority (63.1%) of all PTs see orthopedic sports conditions or injuries, followed by neurological conditions or injuries (56.2%). A majority of PTAs see neurological conditions or injuries (62.8%) followed by cardiovascular or pulmonary injuries or conditions (51.4%) and orthopedic sports injuries or conditions (46.0%). No statistical analysis was conducted on primary types of injuries or conditions.

Figure 3: Primary Injuries or Conditions for North Dakota Physical Therapists and Physical Therapist

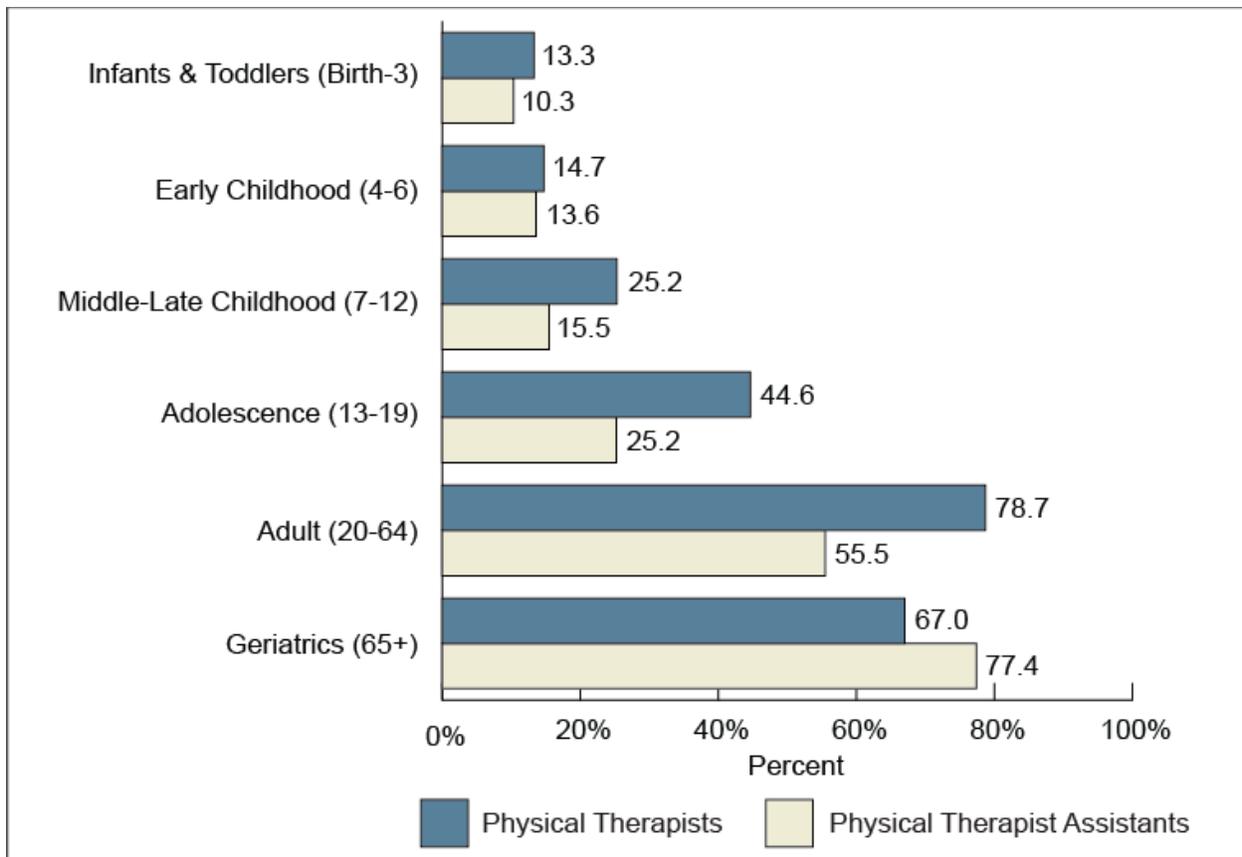
Assistants



*Primary Patient Ages*

The variable of primary patient ages had the potential for multiple responses, as such the reported percentages add up to greater than 100%. A majority (74.4%) of all PTs reported providing care to adults, followed by geriatrics (67.8%). A majority of PTAs reported providing care to geriatrics (83.8%) followed by adults (50.0%). No statistical analysis was conducted on primary patient ages.

Figure 4: Primary Patient Ages for North Dakota Physical Therapists and Physical Therapist Assistants



*Future Plans*

A majority of all PTs and PTAs examined do not have plans to change their work status in the future, with 90.2% in 2018, 89.0% in 2020, and 89.8% in 2022. When future plans were examined for PTs and PTAs separately, there was a slight change in future plans for PTs with 90.5%, 90.3%, and 89.5% for each respective year. When examining PTAs, there was a varied trend of 88.4%, 87.0%, and 87.3% for each respective year.

Table 4: Future Plans for North Dakota Physical Therapists and Physical Therapist Assistants

	PT		PTA		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Decrease my hours in the field of physical therapy	46	4.9%	3	1.9%	49	4.4%
Decrease my hours of direct patient care	10	1.1%	0	0.0%	10	0.9%
Increase my hours in the field of physical therapy	24	2.5%	13	8.2%	37	3.4%
Increase my hours of direct patient care	14	1.5%	4	2.5%	18	1.6%
No planned change	847	89.5%	138	87.3%	985	89.2%
Stop working the field of physical therapy	5	0.5%	0	0.0%	5	0.5%
<b>All</b>	<b>946</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>158</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>1,104</b>	<b>100%</b>