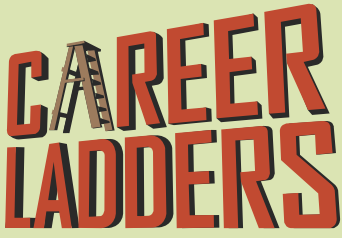


PHYSICAL THERAPIST ASSISTANT



Physical therapist assistants are responsible for helping increase mobility, relieve pain, and prevent or limit permanent physical disabilities of patients suffering from injuries or disease, by directly carrying out a rehabilitation program designed by a physical therapist.

Employment opportunities in the health care field are currently at an exceptionally high level. No matter what the state of the economy, the demand for health care professionals will continue to grow. Individuals can start in entry-level occupations and advance their careers while enjoying the stability of employment. Also, individuals can start at the mid or advanced levels, depending on their education, training, and career goals. At each of the levels, there are many opportunities for more challenging and higher paying positions.

SAGINAW VALLEY

Each ladder depicts a series of work experiences that leads to more challenging and higher paying opportunities. While every level of the ladder can provide a satisfying job, some employees will choose to gain even more skills and responsibilities that will advance them in their careers. To do so, they will need more education, training, and work experiences. Some jobs will require a certificate, a license, or an advanced degree.

CLIMBING THE CAREER LADDER

ADVANCED LEVEL

Associate's, bachelor's, master's or doctorate degree required; must graduate from an accredited program; must obtain license or certification

Physical Therapist
\$23.31-\$33.68/hour

Dental Hygienist
\$21.96-\$32.48/hour

MID LEVEL

Associate's degree or graduation from an accredited program required; must obtain a license or certification

Physical Therapist Assistant
\$14.55-\$20.57/hour

Medical Records Technician
\$9.40-\$14.71/hour

Respiratory Therapist
\$16.55-\$22.18/hour

ENTRY LEVEL

Most occupations require a high school diploma or a graduate equivalency diploma (GED), three to six months training, and knowledge of medical terminology; certification is required in some of the occupations

Home Health Aide
\$6.65-\$9.06/hour

Medical Billers and Coders
\$7.65-\$24.46/hour

Dental Assistant
\$8.35-\$16.20/hour

Wages will vary within this occupation based on the employee's education, training, and years of experience.

JOB DESCRIPTION

Each occupation is described in terms of specific tasks and typical job duties.

A PHYSICAL THERAPIST ASSISTANT MUST BE ABLE TO:

- Perform appropriate treatment techniques and demonstrate knowledge and technical skills
- Communicate effectively with staff, patients, families, peers, and physicians
- Manage time to complete patient care assignments
- Be flexible and adjust to changes in assignments, expectations, and environment in a positive, constructive manner
- Record the patient's responses to treatment and report the outcome of each treatment to the physical therapist
- Demonstrate a high regard for the worth and dignity of each person

WAGES

Wage information was obtained from the Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Growth and from local employers to give a general idea of the wages and salaries for this occupation.

WAGE RANGE

\$14.55-\$20.57/hour

WORKING CONDITIONS

Almost three-fourths of all physical therapist assistant jobs are in hospitals or offices of physical therapists. Work requires prolonged standing, walking, bending, and kneeling 50 to 80 percent of the time. Physical therapy assistants also lift, push, pull, and position patients and/or objects greater than five pounds 30 to 80 percent of the time. The hours and days that physical therapist assistants work vary with the facility and whether they are full- or part-time.

EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Courses, programs, and certificates that are needed for employment are offered by local education and training providers.

HIGH SCHOOL

- Completion of high school's Health Sciences Career Pathway requirements and/or appropriate career and technical education classes
- Algebra
- Chemistry
- Biology
- Career studies, such as the medical careers program at the Saginaw Career Complex and health technology/medical science and the nursing assistant/health careers program at the Bay-Arenac ISD Career Center
- Co-op experience
- Volunteer experience in a health care environment

COMMUNITY COLLEGE

- Delta College: associate's degree in applied science – physical therapist assistant

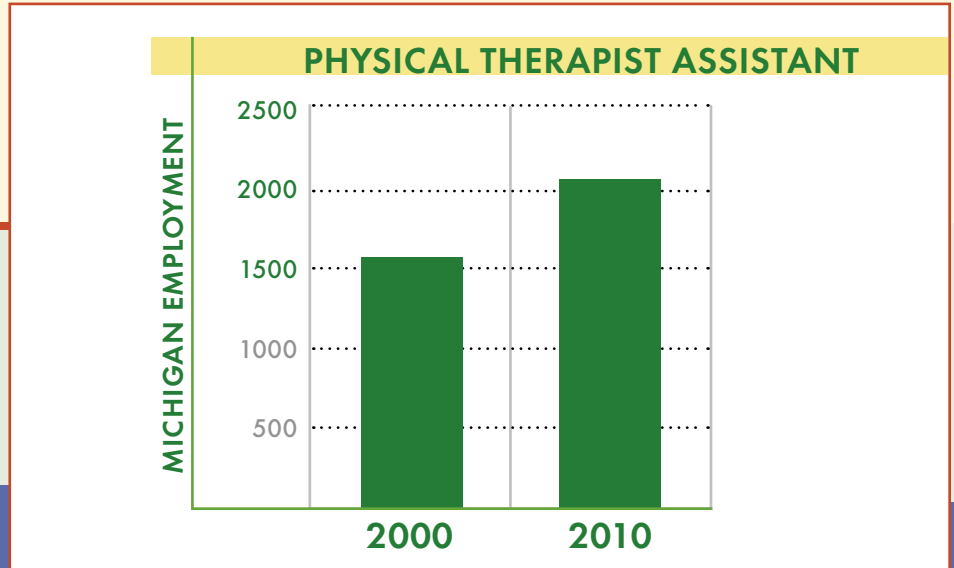
LOCAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING PROVIDERS

- Local school districts
- Bay-Arenac ISD Career Center
- Saginaw Career Complex
- Delta College



JOB OUTLOOK

The rate of growth within this occupation is projected by data from local employers and the Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Growth.



ADVANCEMENT

With experience, physical therapist assistants can advance to staff training and development or to supervisory positions. With further education and training, a physical therapist assistant can become a physical therapist.

WHAT THE EMPLOYER SAID



WHAT DO YOU LOOK FOR IN A POTENTIAL EMPLOYEE FOR THIS POSITION?

"We look for someone who is dedicated and goal-oriented. We also look for someone who enjoys this type of work and is looking for a career and not just a job. We look for someone who is very organized and recognizes the feelings and needs of the patients."

Peter Gennrich, president
Saginaw Valley Sport and Spine

STAR PROFILE

This interview is intended to show you what is needed to be a star employee.



EMPLOYEE:
BRENDA CRAMER

OCCUPATION:
PHYSICAL THERAPIST ASSISTANT

COMPANY:
SAGINAW VALLEY SPORT AND SPINE

TELL US HOW YOU ATTAINED YOUR CURRENT POSITION.

When I first went to college, I was studying to be a teacher. But at that time, few jobs were available. I knew there was a demand for physical therapists, and I actually worked for free to see if I would like this type of work. My volunteer hours really paid off. I was offered a job at Saginaw Valley Sport and Spine and received help with my college tuition from my employer.

DESCRIBE YOUR TYPICAL DAY.

When I arrive at work, I receive a printout of the patients that I am scheduled to see that day. I usually see the same patients three times a week. So that means that they come on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays or on Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays. I perform physical therapy procedures selected by my supervising physical therapist. I record daily progress on each patient's chart. After every five visits, we do a re-evaluation of the patient to see how they are doing. I also provide patient and family education to help assist the patient's recovery.

WHAT QUALITIES MAKE SOMEONE A "STAR" IN THIS OCCUPATION?

A star has a positive attitude and is caring and compassionate. Stars are able to work as part of a team, trying to reach the same goals.

WHAT TRAINING AND EDUCATION DID YOU NEED TO ENTER THIS POSITION?

I have an associate's degree in applied science from Delta College.

WHAT DO YOU LIKE MOST/LEAST ABOUT YOUR JOB?

I like to see the progression in people, especially those patients who don't believe in therapy. It is neat to see patients achieve their goals and see that therapy works. The thing I like least is when patients are not progressing. That means that they need some kind of intervention surgery or to be referred to a pain clinic.

WHAT ADVICE CAN YOU GIVE SOMEONE SEEKING A JOB IN YOUR FIELD?

The big thing is for individuals to volunteer. Someone seeking a job in this field should go somewhere where they can be exposed to the field itself. That way, they can see exactly what is involved in the career before they go to school and get their certification.

ARE THERE ANY LICENSES OR CERTIFICATIONS NEEDED FOR YOUR POSITION?

Currently there are not any licenses or certification needed in the state of Michigan, but that may be changing in the near future.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The Career Ladders project began as a Saginaw County Vision 2020 initiative. To date, more than 300 individuals have been involved in the project. It is impossible to list them all, but the Comprehensive Education and Workforce Development Committee appreciates each one and the incredible participation by our major employers and educational institutions, as well as the support from the Arnold and Gertrude Boutell Memorial Fund, The Dow Chemical Company, The Dow Corning Foundation, the Fordney Club, the Hospital Council of East Central Michigan, the Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Growth, the National Tooling and Machining Association – Saginaw Valley Chapter, the Saginaw Community Foundation, the Saginaw County Business and Education Partnership, the Saginaw County Chamber of Commerce Foundation, Saginaw County's local school districts, Saginaw County's Promise, the Saginaw County Vision 2020, the Saginaw Future Inc., the Saginaw/Midland/Bay Michigan Works!, the Saginaw Township Business Association, the Saginaw Valley Manufacturers' Association, and the Saginaw Valley Tech Prep Partnership. We also want to thank NOVA for their guidance.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER/PROGRAM. AUXILIARY AIDS AND SERVICES ARE AVAILABLE UPON REQUEST TO INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES.