



Demand for Physical Therapists Outweighing Supply

With the passage of the Affordable Care Act (ACA), there's a renewed focus on patient satisfaction and outcomes in hospitals and skilled nursing facilities (SNF) nationwide. Physical Therapists (PTs) are pivotal to achieving high patient satisfaction and successful outcomes - it's virtually their job description. PTs work with the injured or ill to manage their pain and improve movement, restoring patients to a familiar lifestyle. For patients with serious injuries or chronic conditions that require long rehabilitation, these medical professionals are critical to improvement. But unfortunately, the demand for physical therapists is outweighing supply

There are multiple factors contributing to the shortage of PTs, including:

- an aging baby boomer population nearing retirement
- a spike in insured patients due to the ACA
- increased emphasis on shortened hospital stays

The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics predicts a 36 percent projected growth rate over 10 years for physical therapists and a 41 percent growth rate for physical therapist assistants - both much faster

than the average for all US occupations.

But there's a major shortage of therapist talent on the rise. In a recent study conducted by the Cognitive and Motor Learning Laboratory, as well as several other organizations, the forecast was quantified. From the study, ["Physical therapy workforce in the United States: forecasting nationwide shortages:"](#)

On the basis of current trends, demand for PT services will outpace the supply of PTs within the United States. Shortages are expected to increase for all 50 states through 2030. By 2030, the number of states receiving below-average grades for their PT shortages will increase from 12 to 48. States in the Northeast are projected to have the smallest shortages, whereas states in the south and west are projected to have the largest shortages.

Mitigating PT shortages will demand dialogue and possibly even new policy, but those are long-term solutions. Patients need qualified PT's today. To meet these needs, more hospitals are using international physical and occupational therapists (OTs). These foreign-trained physical and occupational therapists make for exceptional options in the absence of local or national talent.

That's because they're educated and trained to perform the same work, at the same level as US-trained therapists. They're not a popular option yet because of an abundance of myths and misinformation floating around about them. But plenty of hospitals have tried international PTs and OTs and have been both surprised and highly satisfied with their quality of work, worth ethic and bedside manner.

An executive from an urban hospital system was asked to speak about her experience using internationally trained healthcare professionals. She was more than happy to share: "*PassportUSA* provided nearly 100 foreign PTs and nurses over the last ten years. We trained them for units and shifts that were our most difficult to staff. Retention has been excellent. Almost all have converted to direct employment at our facility."

If your facility needs PT or OT talent, consider using an international recruiting firm, like *PassportUSA*, that specializes in the recruiting of exceptional foreign-trained PTs and OTs, and avoid the shortage that's about to manifest itself in hospitals and SNFs across the country.