

Accreditation @ 4,500 - \$1,500 each year

CONSIDERATIONS FOR DEVELOPING A PHYSICAL THERAPY ASSISTANT PROGRAM

The Occupational Outlook Handbook, 1994-95 Edition, published by the U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, projects physical and corrective therapy assistants will see a 93% growth rate from 1992-2005. This growth will occur as new technology allows advanced life-saving treatment for individuals with disabilities and as our elderly population increases. An increasing number of employers are also using physical therapy services at the worksite to help rehabilitate as well as keep employees healthy.

According to the American Physical Therapy Association a physical therapy assistant (PTA) is a para-professional who delivers physical therapy services under the supervision of the physical therapist and carries out treatment that has been designed by the physical therapist. The PTA duties include assisting the physical therapist in implementing treatment programs, training patients in exercise and activities of daily living, conducting treatments, using special equipment, administering modalities and other treatment procedures, and reporting to the physical therapist on the patient's response. In many states the PTA must sit for a licensing examination after graduation and prior to employment. A PTA can find work in hospital, nursing homes, home care and other rehabilitation sites.

Research Process

The following information was gathered by telephone interviews with five PTA program directors (listed below) and Nancy Farina, Director of Academic Affairs for the American Physical Therapy Association. Material was reviewed which discussed the process of developing a PTA program and calls were made to physical therapy departments at five clinical sites.

Program directors interviewed:

- Jessie Wood, Henry Ford Community College (313) 730-5968.
- Ann Perkins, Davenport College of Lansing (517) 484-2600
- Jodi Westfall, Baker College of Flint (810)-766-4193.
- ✓ - Deborah Sonn, Delta College (517) 686-9147.
- Deborah Miller, Kellogg Community College (616) 965-3931
- ✓ - Macomb (810) 286-2031

Existing PTA programs in Michigan

Baker College of Muskegon
Baker College of Flint
Delta College
Davenport College in Lansing
Henry Ford Community College
Kellogg Community College

There are other schools which provide PTA programs but they are not credentialed through the American Physical Therapy Association (APTA).

According to the APTA there are 135 PTA programs in the United States, with 31 in the process of developing programs.

Jessie Wood, program director at Henry Ford Community College, expressed concern about OCC starting a PTA program. Her concern was over finding clinical sites. She indicated that Baker College in Flint and Henry Ford Community College already had clinical sites in Oakland County, including the Pontiac area. She indicated that each program needs at least 70 clinicals and it is often difficult to find sites. Other program directors also indicated finding clinical sites could be a problem.

Student Interest and Student Placement

Most Michigan programs enroll between 28-30 PTA students per year. Waiting lists ranged from 150 to 200 students. When Baker College in Flint opened their PTA program they had 630 prospective students who applied, this was without any advertising.

Program directors advised using a selective admissions process. Henry Ford Community College does not do so, but is moving in that direction.

Placement of students from the program was very high with some program at 100 percent. The hourly salary for PTA was \$10-\$15 per hour with insurance. PTAs who worked in home care can make up to \$25 per hour without insurance. Overall, salaries ranged from \$23-\$30,000 for PTAs.

One of the concerns is over saturation of the PTA job market within a local area. PTAs tend not to be mobile individuals. The APTA stressed that a program should orientate its students toward a national job market. Deborah Miller from Kellogg Community College has always had high placement levels, but because more colleges are now offering the program, she is beginning to have difficulty in placing her Battle Creek graduates. Many of the students do not want to move out of state.

Resources needed to develop at PTA program

Resources that are essential include faculty, space, supportive personnel and money.

Minimum space requirement include a therapeutic procedures laboratory, a classroom, student locker and dressing rooms, faculty-staff offices, and storage space. Most of the individuals I interviewed indicated it would cost a minimum of \$100,000.00 to start a program.

Personnel includes a program director who must be a physical therapist or a physical therapist assistant with a bachelors degree. The program also needs a clinical coordinator. Both the program director and clinical coordinator may also teach courses.

Two personnel concerns which should be considered when starting a PTA program are the difficulty it finding faculty and salary. It is often difficult to find faculty because the physical therapist can make more money in the field than in education. Most colleges had to increase their base salary rate to be able to find a PTA program director. Though no one would give me the exact salary of a program director, it was indicated that the beginning range would be between \$45 - \$55,000.

Student to faculty ratio ranges from 8 to 1 for certain learning experiences, up to 32 to 1 for classroom lecture. The average ratio is 16 to 1.

Consultants are often used throughout the program's development and early implementation stages. The APTA also suggested to use a consultant during the feasibility stage of developing the program.

Initial accreditation fee is \$7,500 and the annual fee is \$1,500. There is an additional cost of a Reader/Consultant one-day on-site visit for candidacy.

Other Information Gathered From Telephone Interviews

A program director is not needed until after the feasibility study, but the individual should be in place soon after the study is completed.

From the initial investigation to completion it took approximately two years to have a program up and running.

Important questions to ask the clinical sites are:

- What do you think the job market for PTAs will be like in the next 5-10 years?
- Are you an affiliations site for any other PTA programs?
- Would you be willing to be a clinical site for OCC?
- Do you think there is a need for an occupational therapy assistant program?

The accreditation is a five step process:

- Submitting declaration of intent
- Correcting deficits as sited by the accrediting organizations
- First onsite visit for one and one-half days by Reader/Consultant
- Rule on candidacy of accreditation
- Self-study report

It is very difficult to find sufficient clinical sites.

Clinical Sites Interviewed

Diversified Rehabilitation - Steve Petrowski

- Needs PTAs, there is a high demand and demand is increasing
- Nursing homes are their main focus of operation
- They would be willing to become a clinical site

North Oakland Medical - Cindy Greer

- They use two PTAs
- Already have affiliations with Baker and Macomb
- Probably would not take another affiliation

Beaumont Troy - Reyna Blumentritt

- Use PTAs
- Expect to see increased use in the future
- They have affiliations with six universities inc.
- Would be willing to consider an affiliation with

*Manly Bulech
Cultetone*

5 PTAs

Affiliate to Macomb C.C.

*Possible affiliation = C.C.C.
willing to help.*

Beaumont Royal Oak - Karen Johnstone

- Use six PTAs at Royal Oak and three in home
- Sees a good future for PTAs
- Basically has affiliation agreement with all colle
- Would be willing to consider an affiliation with

St. Joseph - Pontiac - Linda Erickson

- Use PTAs
- Believes there will be an increased need
- Currently has affiliation with Macomb, Henry Ford and Baker
- Would be willing to consider an affiliation with OCC

Total Rehabilitation - David Diener

- Use PTAs in nursing homes and hospitals
- Contracts out with Huron Valley and Oakland General
- Has affiliation agreements with several universities and community colleges, including Baker and Macomb
- Would be willing to consider an affiliation with OCC

PHYSICAL THERAPIST ASSISTANT

MOIS

"Physical Therapist Assistants and Therapy Aides assist Physical Therapists in conducting medically prescribed treatment programs for patients to restore function, relieve pain, and prevent disability following disease, injury, or loss of a body part."

General Duties of Physical Therapist Assistants may include:

- Assisting the Physical Therapist in performing patient tests, measurements, and evaluations, such as range-of-motions and manual-muscle tests, gait and functional analyses, and body-parts measurements.
- Conferring with the physician, and with physical therapists, social workers, nurses, and psychologists regarding patient cases.
- Administering manual therapeutic exercises to improve or maintain muscle function.
- Teaching and motivating patients in nonmanual exercises, such as isometrics and practical activities, such as walking.
- Administering treatments involving the application of such agents as light, heat, water, and electricity.
- Observing the effects of various types and durations of treatments and conferring with the physical therapist and medical staff on adjusting treatment to achieve maximum benefits.
- Administering deep and surface massage techniques.
- Administering traction to relieve neck and back pain.
- Recording patients' treatments, responses, and progress.
- Instruction patients and their families in physical therapy procedures to be continued at home.
- Training patients in the use of prosthetic and orthotic devices and recommending modifications.
- Directing the work of Physical Therapy Aides and students in training.

Salary - Physical Therapy Assistant - statewide - \$18,025 - \$31,872

expected to grow much faster than the average

= trade schools???

= look in newspapers for PTA ads