

I'm not just part of the
physical therapy team.

I'm helping Veterans
regain mobility
and confidence.

Timothy, VA Orthotist/Prosthetist



Become a VA physical therapist.



Veterans Health
Administration

Why VA?

The **best care** starts with the **best opportunities.**

More than a century ago, President Lincoln made a promise to America's servicemen and women, pledging the care and concern of a grateful Nation for the sacrifices they made to preserve freedom. Since 1930, the mission of the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has been to keep that promise.

Today, Department of Veterans Affairs has grown into one of the largest, most technologically advanced health care systems in the United States. We have employees who work at more than 153 medical centers, 909 ambulatory and community-based outpatient clinics, 135 nursing homes, and a number of other facilities across the country.

At VA we strive to provide a professional, supportive environment where our patients, *and you*, can thrive.



VA and physical therapy.

If you're looking for an opportunity to help our Nation's Heroes regain their freedom and independence, then a career as a VA occupational therapist could be for you.

As valued members of VA's patient care teams, our physical therapists contribute directly to the interdisciplinary process of planning for patient care, and they apply the latest advances in rehabilitative treatment to create the very best patient care plans.

In return, we offer them competitive salaries, first-rate employment benefits, and nationwide job transfer opportunities.

If you have an interest in serving those who have served our country, all while pioneering the way in physical therapy, then explore a career with VA.



The **best** patients.

There's a certain camaraderie that Veterans share with each other. Young or old, male or female: those who have served our country enjoy the company of those who have experienced the same.

And as any VA physical therapist will explain, Veterans extend that bond to their rehabilitation care team. Because our enrolled Veterans are assured treatment from the onset of a condition through goal achievement, our physical therapists have the opportunity to form lasting relationships with their patients.

From injured active duty personnel to middle age and elderly Veterans, our patients grow to rely on their VA caregivers to develop the most unique and resourceful treatment options — and at VA, our physical therapists are supported in doing so.

Guided by integrity and lifelong learning, our VA physical therapists experience a freedom of practice that is backed by the support and experience of a multi-specialty staff and management.



The best networking.



Nothing motivates a professional environment like the sharing of knowledge and mentorship. And unlike any other health care system, VA offers vast networking opportunities for its physical therapists to do just that.

Through online mail groups and regular conference calls, VA's physical therapists have access to hundreds of their peers to share and to learn new information and techniques. Most of our physical therapists are leaders in their fields who serve as in-house mentors, and can regularly share their research and best practices.

In fact, our National VA Physical Therapy Advisory Council partners with American Physical Therapy Association (APTA) to advocate for needed change at the national level. A number of VA physical therapists serve in leadership roles in APTA as officers for sections and state delegates, as well as officers in state and district groups.

When you join the VA health care team, you'll become part of an organized voice that not only advocates for, but also facilitates the continued development of its physical therapists.

The **best technology.**

Take your career to a higher level.

At VA, we're committed to improving our patients' results and are dedicated to enhancing our employee experience. Our technology-driven care is one way by which we try to accomplish both. And after years of development, VA now has the most comprehensive Computerized Patient Records System (CPRS) in the Nation.

Now, VA employees can access patient medical records from any location in the Nation. Our intricate computer system puts each Veteran's medical records, lab results, x-rays, EKGs, and more at the fingertips of physical therapists and the entire patient care team as they work together to design the best possible treatments and interventions.

Additionally, VA rehabilitation teams experience the benefit of working with today's state-of-the-art assistive technologies with the goal of improving patient independence.

Physical Therapy **Practice at VA**



More **education.** More **affiliations.** More **opportunities.**

No matter which direction you choose, VA offers our physical therapists a rich environment primed to develop their interest in either clinical education or research.

And because of numerous affiliations with colleges and universities, many VA physical therapists also guide students' clinical residencies, as well as conduct national and international continuing education courses. Others conduct ongoing research in conjunction with various learning institutions in cardiopulmonary rehabilitation, spinal cord injury, and sensory motor disturbances.

VA is also a nationally recognized leader in prosthetics research and development through the PAVE (Prevention of Amputation for Veterans Everywhere) program, and these relationships keep our physical therapists on the cutting-edge.



VA offers a clinical setting in a **supportive environment.**

As one of the largest health care systems in the Nation, our connected network provides our physical therapists the opportunity to work with each other over a wider range of opportunities across the continuum of care. From primary care and wellness programs to disease prevention and post-trauma rehabilitation, our clinical care practice settings include:

- Inpatient acute care
- Primary care
- Comprehensive inpatient and outpatient rehabilitation programs
- Spinal cord injury centers
- Geriatric/extended care
- Polytrauma centers
- Amputation centers

Team-based rehabilitation methodologies are stressed at VA, and many of our physical therapists work directly with acute medical, surgical, neurological, orthopedic, and cardiopulmonary teams. They are also key members of home-based patient care, amputee teams, traumatic brain injury care, palliative care, podiatry teams, geriatric teams and primary care practice teams.



Did you know **that VA:**

- Employs over 1,500 physical therapists
- Provides clinical education to more than 400 physical therapy students each year
- Has achieved industry-leading accreditations from the Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF) and the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Health Care Organizations (JCAHCO)
- Provides inpatient care to about 650,000 Veterans and manages more than 75 million outpatient visits each year through medical centers and supporting facilities
- Has facilities in all 50 states, U.S. territories, and the District of Columbia
- Is committed to improving patient care through the use of technology, including a Computerized Patient Record System (CPRS), wireless handheld connectivity, and more
- Works cooperatively with the Department of Defense to provide special care programs to active duty military personnel with spinal cord injuries, traumatic head injuries, and amputations
- Provides medical care backup to military hospitals and active service members and their families during national emergencies, and operates command centers to coordinate services through the National Disaster Medical Service during major disasters such as hurricanes
- VA provides PT residency education at 6 sites in Cardiopulmonary, Neurologic, Orthopedic and Geriatric Physical Therapy



Mobility is just one of the advantages of working for VA. We offer employment opportunities from coast to coast and beyond. So, whether you enjoy living beachside, in a bustling metropolis or in the serene countryside, there's likely a VA facility nearby.

More education offers more opportunities.

The Department of Veterans Affairs recognizes the importance of ongoing education and the benefit it provides to both Veteran patients and employees. VA encourages career development for physical therapists through the following programs:

UPWARD MOBILITY TRAINING PROGRAMS

These programs offer, on a competitive basis, opportunities to advance to higher level positions.

IN-SERVICE EDUCATION PROGRAMS

These programs are offered locally and through the VA Employee Education System (EES).

EMPLOYEE INCENTIVE SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM (EISP)

This scholarship program allows VHA employees to further their education and obtain degrees qualifying them for health care positions for which recruitment and retention is difficult.

TUITION SUPPORT PROGRAM

Employees in health care disciplines identified by VA as “shortage categories” are eligible for funding to enroll in job-related courses, continuing education courses, and conferences.

EDUCATION DEBT REDUCTION PROGRAM (EDRP)

Reduce your qualifying school loan debt with a VHA loan reimbursement program. To qualify, EDRP must be offered within the recruiting VHA Medical Center’s vacancy announcement for a qualifying position that provides patient care services.

ADDITIONAL EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

- Tuition support for job-related and continuing education courses
- National and regional education programs developed for physical therapy staff
- Paid time off for approved continuing education programs
- On-site formal and informal education programs

Better benefits. The best care.

VAs mission is to provide the best possible care for Americas Veterans. In return for helping VA achieve this goal, VA offers extensive benefits to all our employees.

LEAVE AND HOLIDAYS

- 13 to 26 days paid annual (vacation/personal) leave, depending on years of service
- 13 days paid annual sick leave
- 10 paid annual Federal holidays
- 15 days paid annual military leave
- Family and Medical Leave Act, which allows employees to take up to 12 weeks of leave for medical reasons, for the birth or adoption/foster care of a child, and for the care of a child, spouse, or parent who has a serious health problem

HEALTH AND LIFE INSURANCE

- VA offers our employees a choice of group health insurance plans with the majority of premiums paid by the Federal Government; insurance may become effective as soon as the first full pay period after beginning duty
- We also offer term life insurance, family, and additional coverage options are available with the cost shared by the Federal Government

RETIREMENT

Our employees are covered by the Federal Employees' Retirement System (FERS). FERS, a three-tier retirement plan, is comprised of Social Security benefits, FERS basic benefits, and the Thrift Saving Plan (TSP). TSP is a tax-deferred savings plan with an automatic base contribution and partial matching of employee contributions by the Federal Government.



MOBILITY AND LICENSURE

Where can a career as a physical therapist with VA take you? How about locations in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and the Philippines. Our employees may transfer to any location where there is an available vacancy without loss of benefits and usually no loss in pay. Multiple licenses are not required. In fact, VA physical therapists may practice in any VA medical facility, regardless of location, with a current, full, active, and unrestricted license to practice physical therapy from any State, Commonwealth, or Territory (e.g., Puerto Rico) of the United States, or the District of Columbia.

LIABILITY PROTECTION

At VA, our physical therapists are protected by the Federal Tort Claims Act when functioning within their Federal scope of practice. This statute provides immunity from personal liability for damages arising from medical malpractice or negligence by health care personnel of the Veterans Health Administration (VHA) in furnishing medical care or treatment in the exercise of their official duties in or for VHA.

AWARDS AND HONORS

VA may bestow both monetary and honorary recognition for overall superior performance and special or unique achievements.

ADDITIONAL BENEFITS

- Smoke-free and drug-free workplace
- Childcare at some facilities
- Childcare subsidy program
- Free parking at most facilities
- Transit subsidy programs at most facilities
- Uniform allowance (if applicable)
- Credit unions
- Employee association
- Dining facilities and tax-free retail store
- Employee wellness programs

Testimonial

"I have been a VA employee for 26 years, and I can still honestly say I look forward to coming to work each day. The Veterans appreciation makes it all worth it."

- Kathleen, VA PT

VA hiring policies.

QUALIFICATIONS

Minimum qualifications for appointment as a VA physical therapist are as follows:

- U.S. citizenship (non-citizens may be hired when it is not possible to recruit qualified citizens)
- A baccalaureate degree, or equivalent certificate in physical therapy, from an accredited college or university, and completion of a physical therapy clinical practice program; education and clinical practice program must be approved by the Commission on Accreditation in Physical Therapy Education
- Current, full, active, and unrestricted license to practice physical therapy in a State, Commonwealth, or Territory of the United States, or the District of Columbia
- English language proficiency
- Satisfactory physical examination (may include drug screening)

SALARY

- VA offers competitive salaries that meet or exceed the community standard
- Starting salaries and grades are recommended by the Physical Therapy Professional Standards Board based on professional education, training, and experience
- Special entrance salary rates and ongoing special salary rates are in effect at many locations based on pay-related staffing needs and based on locality cost of living
- The GS scale is revised periodically based on the rate of increase in private sector salaries
- Physical therapists are awarded regular increases within each grade based on demonstrated performance. Accelerated increases within each grade may be awarded for outstanding performance and achievement. Achievement increases may be given for research, publication, academic appointments, advanced degrees, and election to an office of a professional organization
- Physical therapists receive periodic consideration for promotion to higher grades with correspondingly higher salaries as experience requirements and performance standards are met
- VA offers premium pay for physical therapists asked to work overtime, on-call, night, weekend, or holiday duty

Call the Human Resources Management Office at your local VA health care facility or visit VAcareers.va.gov to learn more. For more information, call **1-800-949-0002**.

How to Apply:

VAcareers.va.gov

VA can take you anywhere you want to live and work. We have facilities in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and U.S. Territories. So, whether you're a confirmed urbanite, fond of the beach, or in search of peaceful Midwestern landscapes, you can explore VA occupational therapist opportunities.

Because hiring decisions are made locally, you should apply directly to the Human Resources Management Office at the VA health care facility where you desire employment consideration. Information about VA Occupational Therapy and application procedures may be obtained from any VA facility.

Veteran employment information can also be obtained by contacting

VAplacementservice@va.gov

The toll-free number is **1-800-949-0002**

Employment information and job applications can also be found on the Internet at

VAcareers.va.gov



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