

Physical Therapist Assistant*

(AAS Non-Transfer Degree)

Health Science Career Cluster

SAN JUAN COLLEGE

NATURE OF WORK

A physical therapist assistant (PTA) is a health care professional involved in direct patient care under the supervision of a Physical Therapist (PT). A PTA applies therapeutic modalities to alleviate pain including hot and cold packs, paraffin baths, ultrasound, electrical stimulation and traction. A PTA restores function through therapeutic massage, athletic taping and gait training. A PTA educates patients about appropriate therapeutic exercises to optimize their functional outcome. PTAs cannot perform the initial evaluation of the patient, change the plan of care or discharge the patient. These are the duties of a PT.

WORKING CONDITIONS

The PTA may work full or part-time with varied hours and days. PTAs are found in nursing homes, outpatient clinics, schools, early intervention, sports therapy, inpatient rehabilitation, hospitals and other types of facilities. Some assistants working in outpatient offices or clinics may work evening or weekend hours, to coincide with patients' personal schedules. PTAs need a moderate degree of strength because of the physical exertion required in assisting patients with their treatment. In some cases, assistants need to lift patients. Constant kneeling, stooping, and standing for long periods are also part of the job.

TRAINING & QUALIFICATIONS

Physical Therapist Assistants typically earn an associate degree from a Physical Therapist Assistant Program accredited by the Commission on Accreditation in Physical Therapy Education (CAPTE). Students who successfully complete this type of program are eligible to take the National Physical Therapist Assistant Licensure Examination in order to practice in most states.

JOB OUTLOOK

Employment of Physical Therapist Assistants is expected to grow much faster than average through the year 2014. Over the long run, demand for Physical Therapist Assistants will continue to rise, in accordance with growth in the number of individuals with disabilities or limited function.

Most of this information is from the Occupational Outlook Handbook—2005-2006 and the SJC School of Allied Health

CAREER OPTIONS

Physical Therapist Assistant

ESTIMATED SALARY RANGE

New Mexico — \$30,000 - \$40,000

Nationally — \$32,000 - \$45,000

RELATED OCCUPATIONS

Dental Assistant, Medical Assistant, Occupational Therapist Assistant, Pharmacy Aides, and Pharmacy Technicians.

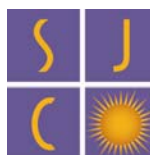
SJC Basic Program Requirements

Program Admission Requirements:

- SJC offers an On-campus and Online PTA Program.
- Both programs offer an Associate of Applied Science (AAS) degree and are accredited by CAPTE.
- Both programs are selective and accept 12-15 applicants every year.
- The application deadline for either program is August 1 for each year with the technical program beginning every January. Applications can be downloaded from www.sanjuancollege.edu/pta.
- Interested students may contact Dr. Wendy Bircher, PTA Program Director at (505)566-3425.



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For further information go to:
www.sanjuancollege.edu/pta
www.careers-nm.org
www.bls.gov/oco/ocos167.htm