
The State Of Pelvic Floor Physical Therapy

A 2023 Report By Vitality Pelvic Health



If you've made it to our website, chances are you have been researching, or have been referred to pelvic floor physical therapy for some sort of pelvic related dysfunction.

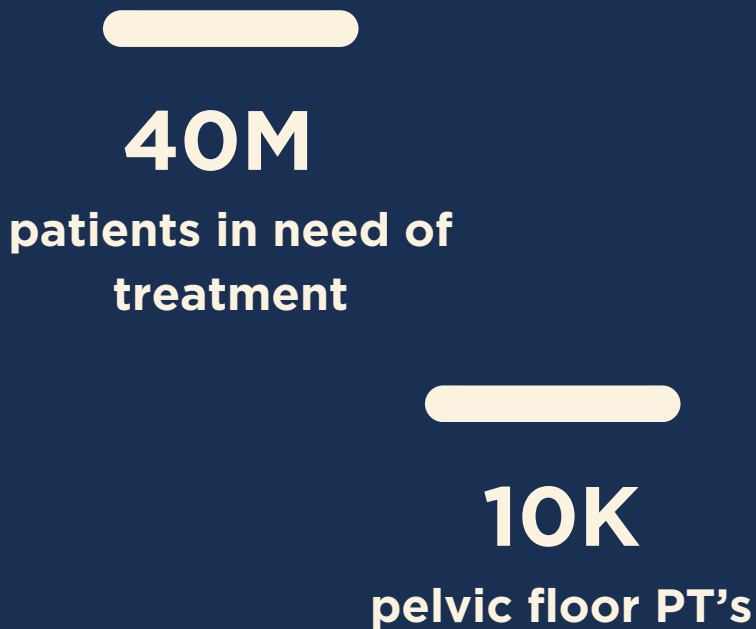
While searching, you may have noticed that there is an overwhelming amount of information targeting pelvic floor dysfunction.

It can feel daunting (and we are here to help), but the increase of pelvic floor related content is a positive in the realm of healthcare!



It is estimated that around 30% of US women and 16% of men suffer from some sort of pelvic floor dysfunction. The burgeoning field of pelvic floor therapy means more people seeking the care they desperately need, but unfortunately interest does not always translate to acquiring care.

Despite growth, there is still a large gap between providers and those who need pelvic floor focused care. There is no official registry of pelvic floor physical therapists, but it is estimated there are roughly 10,000 providers equipped to care for the estimated 40 million who need care (APTA).



A quick search through registries and Google listings for the entirety of Oklahoma, North Texas, Northwest Arkansas, and Southeast Kansas shows fewer than 100 practitioners providing pelvic floor care. For many patients, they are driving up to an hour to access the care they need.

Practicing pelvic floor physical therapy requires extensive and costly training beyond the standard of most doctorate programs, which fosters patient inaccessibility and creates a barrier to practitioners pursuing pelvic floor PT.

Physical therapy programs and residencies are just now trying to catch up to demand, with much more work to do in order to see a significant change in provider to patient ratio.



Aside from the lack of accessibility to training, there is a compensation gap too. Reimbursement rates for pelvic floor physical therapy are often unsustainable for the clinic, and leave patients with surprise bills.

The constant back and forth with insurance and restrictions put on plan of care creates clinician burnout and low quality of care. All of these factors come together to create scarcity in first-rate treatment.

At Vitality, we have sought to go out of network to circumvent some of these issues, increasing our direct accessibility and providing premium care with no surprise medical bills.

Our patients typically see quick results on a shorter, more holistic plan of care that is highly tailored to their individual needs.



What about other barriers to care? Knowledge of care and knowledge of treatment in the general population is still very low.

Many individuals suffering from pelvic floor dysfunction have no idea this is an option for them, or lack the knowledge about what to expect as far as treatment protocols are concerned. (It's not just kegels).

Women also commonly express feelings of shame, normative thinking, fear of judgment, and self-blame in regards to their pelvic floor dysfunction. We are here to tell you that your symptoms are not normal, are not your fault, are not shameful, and can absolutely be addressed.



1

Lack of knowledge

“I have no idea what treatment looks like or if there even is one”

2

Normative thinking

“I’m just accepting that my body is changing as I age, and this is normal now”

3

Embarrassment

“This is so awkward, I don’t know how to speak up and ask questions”

4

Fear of judgement

“I wonder what my Dr thought of me after I left. Is this the worst they have ever seen?”

5

Self blame

“This has to be my fault. I’m overweight so it’s my fault and I dont deserve help”

Potential patients are not alone in this either, many physicians do not understand the efficacy of pelvic floor physical therapy and therefore are less likely to refer.

Many programs in the US do not teach physicians full evaluation and diagnosis of musculoskeletal disorders from a functional standpoint, leaving them limited in what they can suggest to their patients.



If physicians know it's needed, they may not know who to refer to in their community. Screening for pelvic floor dysfunction and referral to conservative care can eliminate unnecessary lab tests, imaging, and financial burden.

The good news is that we know pelvic floor therapy can help.

Pelvic floor physical therapy has been proven to reduce stress incontinence, improve pelvic pain, improve prolapse, and address a long list of other symptoms related to dysfunction.



We believe patient education is empowering, and we are eager to share our knowledge with you at Vitality Pelvic Health.

We encourage you to reach out and chat with us about your experience, no matter the barriers, and see how we can help.