Creating Futures

UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO ANSCHUTZ MEDICAL CAMPUS

Scholarships Change Lives
Physical Therapy Program
Consider this: upon graduation, the current average debt of a physical therapy (PT) student is $80,000 for students from Colorado. For out-of-state students, the debt averages more than $100,000. These figures are typical across the country and are likely to continue to rise.

Costs have increased exponentially. Why? A major factor is the higher cost of living. Reduced state subsidies and changes to the federal loan program also play a role. And like most PT programs across the country, ours has augmented and enriched its educational requirements, extending the curriculum one additional year in order for students to earn their Doctor of Physical Therapy degree.

Here at the University of Colorado (CU), more than 85 percent of the incoming class of physical therapy students needs some degree of financial assistance.

Unfortunately, unlike physicians, physical therapists can’t expect huge salaries upon graduation. The result is that this debt load may discourage high-achieving and committed young people away from physical therapy at CU.

As this is happening, there is a national shortage of physical therapists and we are experiencing a shortage of physical therapists from diverse backgrounds. For our profession to evolve and continue to produce the highest caliber physical therapists, we must eliminate these unacceptable financial barriers. The profession of physical therapy is too important and the stakes are too high for those who rely on our essential medical and rehabilitative services.

“We have lost great candidates to other schools that offer better scholarship packages to their students. In order to attract the best students to CU, we must reduce their staggering debt loads,” said Margaret Schenkman, PT, PhD, FAPTA, Associate Dean for Physical Therapy Education and Director of the Physical Therapy Program, School of Medicine.

The Solution: Scholarships

Scholarships change lives. They make a huge impact on students’ ability to choose the field of their choice and on their day-to-day experiences in school.

The financial aspect of a scholarship is essential to potential students and their futures. And just as important, students report that receiving a scholarship means so much in terms of feeling that someone is investing and believing in them.

The Physical Therapy Program’s scholarship initiative will:

• Recognize and honor excellence
• Increase placement in rural areas
• Increase diversity

“I was very excited to receive the scholarship. I am married with a young family, so it will make a huge difference to us. And it will impact in how quickly I can repay my loans,” says DPT student Clayton Shaw. But even with a generous scholarship from the Colorado Trust, Shaw says he is concerned about the amount of debt he’ll have when he graduates, which will be about $130,000.
A Program of Excellence and Diversity

The Physical Therapy Program at the University of Colorado is part of the School of Medicine, which consistently ranks among the best medical schools in the country. Similarly, the Physical Therapy Program is one of the best programs of its kind in the nation.

- **Our curriculum is innovative and leading edge.** We are among the leaders of programs implementing a new model of education that includes a final, year-long, paid internship.

- **Our educational environment offers interprofessional courses and opportunities.** Technologically-rich classrooms and skills laboratories include the Center for Advancing Professional Excellence or CAPE, an 18,000 foot, state-of-the-art, learning and assessment center for medical simulations.

- **The licensure examination pass rate for our students is annually among the highest in Colorado and across the nation.** Each year we graduate about 60 physical therapists and upon graduation, 99 percent of our graduates pass the National Physical Therapy Examination (NPTE). Ninety-three percent of our graduates are employed within six months after graduation and 98 percent are employed within one year.

- **Our faculty are internationally recognized in clinical and research areas as well as scholarship.** Areas of clinical expertise include Cardiopulmonary-, Hand-, Neurologic-, Orthopedic-, and Pediatric-physical therapy. We have a healthy balance between educators, clinicians and producers of research/scholarship.

- **In terms of research, our faculty lead in rehabilitation research that earns $1 million of funding per year** and we offer faculty-mentored research opportunities for students along with the opportunity to pursue a PhD in Rehabilitation Sciences.

- **We offer service opportunities** for students and faculty to work together in community initiatives, including monthly physical therapy services at a clinic for homeless individuals and an annual educational program for physical therapists in Managua, Nicaragua.

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**Paul Mintken, PT, DPT, OCS**
Associate Professor, School of Medicine

*“The PT Program now is a lot more evidenced based. We have re-tooled our curriculum to reflect the most current research, and we have many faculty now that are doing research projects and getting published in peer reviewed journals. We are recognized as one of the premier programs in the country.”*
Help Us Prepare the Best Physical Therapists for Colorado and the Nation

All patients need and deserve top-notch physical therapists who are committed to clinical care, research, scholarship and community service. By giving now, you can help the University of Colorado Physical Therapy Program recruit the best, brightest and most diverse students to provide the highest caliber of care for those in need.

Support for this initiative will ensure that Colorado has the best possible practitioners. And because we aim to send physical therapists into diverse communities, scholarships for students who want to work in these areas will help us accomplish these goals.

Our shared investment in students will yield enormous returns.

Gifts, both small and large, combine to create scholarships that can change lives.

Join us to make a difference: for students, for patients who rely upon our essential medical and rehabilitative services, and for the advancing profession of physical therapy.

Linda Hannen, Alumna, Professor, Volunteer and Donor

Linda Hannen, PT, MHS knows the Physical Therapy Program as well as any one person could. She is an alumna, receiving both her Bachelor’s and Master’s from CU; she is a veteran PT clinician; and was an instructor in the PT Program for nearly 10 years. Active on the Alumni Board, she also makes a point to financially support scholarships each year.

She says that times have changed. “When I graduated in 1970, the tuition wasn’t as high and the program wasn’t as long,” says Hannen. “It was easier for families to help their children go through school. Now families are so stretched, most are unable to help their children through professional school.”

“I’ve been giving for 15 years now. I realized that if I could just give a little bit every year, it would add up,” says Hannen. “So I do what I can because I know it makes a difference.”