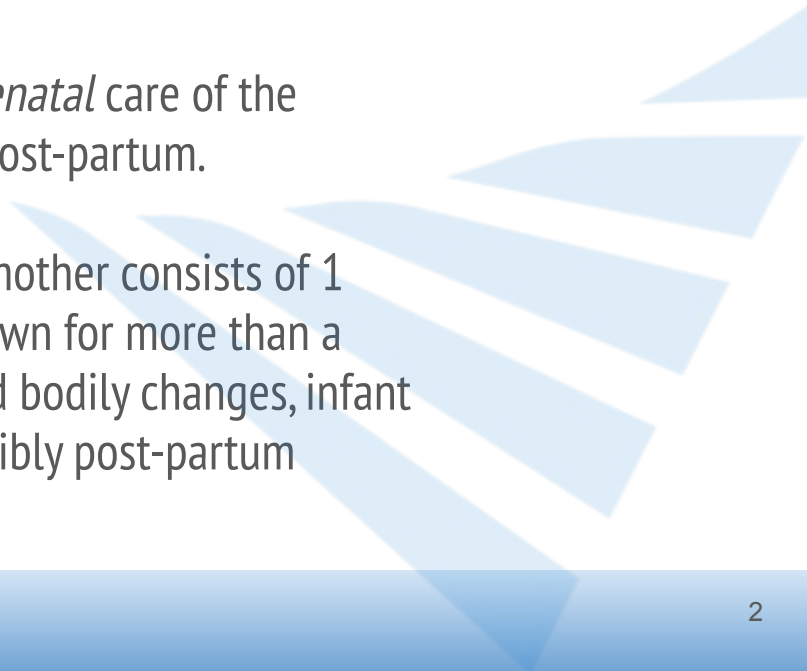


4th Trimester Care & Growing, Attracting and Retaining Physical Therapists/PTA's

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4th Trimester- What is it?

- Commonly known as the post-partum period.
 - Can be as long as 12 + months.
 - Traditionally, focus shifts from the *prenatal* care of the mother to the the care of the infant post-partum.
 - Historically, post-partum care of the mother consists of 1 visit, leaving moms to cope on their own for more than a month while addressing hormone and bodily changes, infant feeding issues, lack of sleep, and possibly post-partum depression.
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4th Trimester Care: Guidance and Policies

- New Mexico Legislature [House Memorial 4](#)
(Ortez & Fajardo, 2022- Fourth Trimester Care Day)
- United States Congress [HR 8181](#) (2021)
- [ACOG Statement on Post-Partum Care](#)
- Academy of Pelvic Health Physical Therapy Task Force Statement

4th Trimester Care- Why is it important?

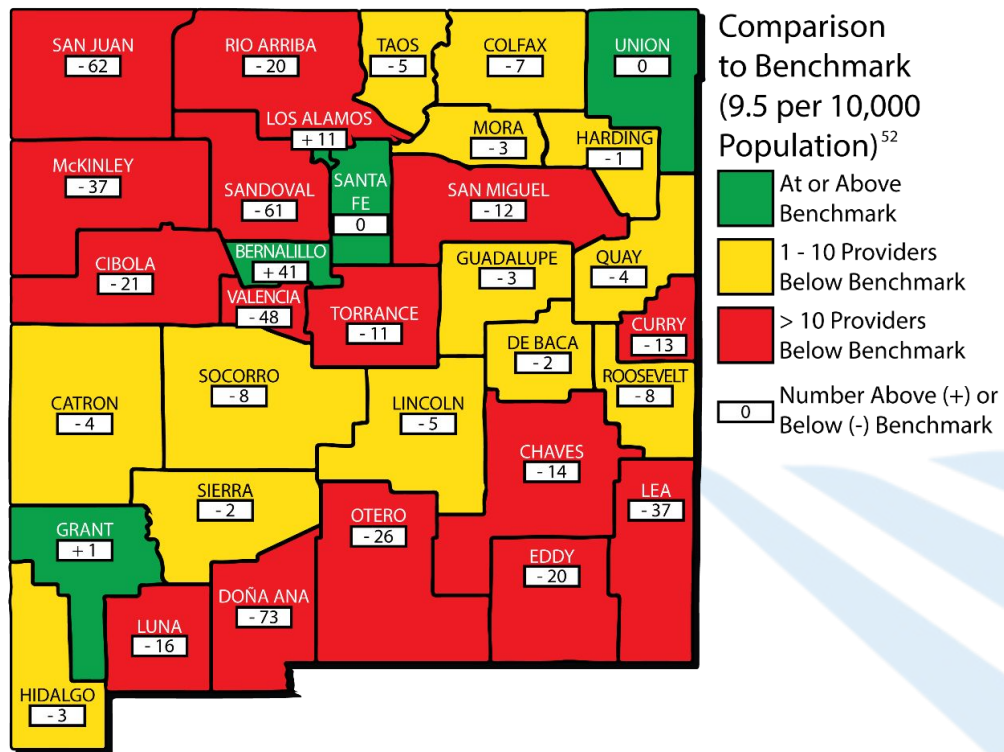
- 4th trimester care can aid in decreasing maternal mortality.
- Receiving physical therapy sooner helps identify signs and symptoms that require immediate referral.
 - Screening for post-partum depression
- Physical therapy leads to less reliance on opioids due to managing symptoms sooner.
- Managing expectations of post-partum recovery. (What's normal?)
- Maternal well-being.



In 1975, childbirth educator Shelia Kitzinger argued that moms need more in the weeks following birth: “There is a fourth trimester to pregnancy, and we neglect it at our peril. It is a transitional period of approximately three months after birth, particularly marked after first babies, when women are emotionally highly vulnerable, when they experience confusion and recurrent depression, and during which anxiety is normal and states of reactive depression commonplace.”

Four decades later, there is evidence that suggests that we haven't made much progress. According to a [national online survey](#) of new mothers, a third to half report experiencing a wide range of health problems following birth.

Physical Therapists Compared to Benchmark, 2021



As of 2018, according to American Physical Therapy Association Data

- # of practicing Physical Therapists in New Mexico - 2088
- # of practicing Physical Therapy Assistants (PTAs) in New Mexico - 983

Number of practicing Pelvic Health Physical Therapists in New Mexico

- 9 Licensee's in NM who report treating pelvic floor dysfunction
- 2 Board Certified Clinical Specialists in Women's Health Physical Therapy
- 29 APTA NM members of APTA Academy of Pelvic Health Physical Therapy

Accredited PT programs: University of New Mexico

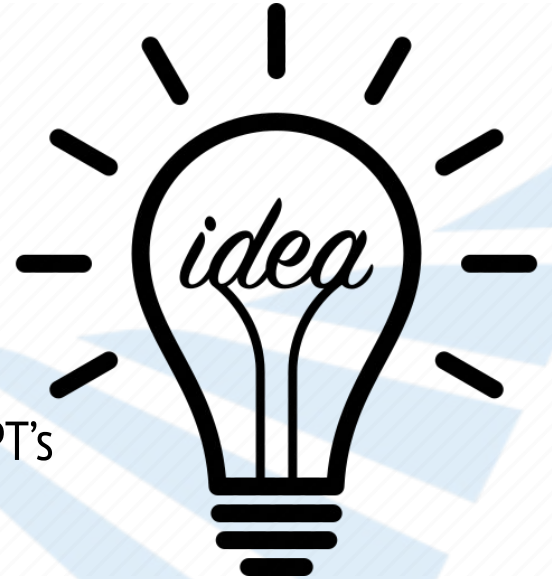
Accredited PTA programs: Central New Mexico Community College, Clovis Community College, Pima Medical Institute - Albuquerque Campus, San Juan College

Barriers to Providing Physical Therapy to the Families of New Mexico

- Staffing shortages (especially in rural areas) as seen in the 2021 & 2022 New Mexico Workforce Reports.
- Hiring difficulties- lack of financial incentives to bring physical therapists to New Mexico in a time of increased student debt.
- Cuts in healthcare due to decreased reimbursement, resulting in decreased recruitment packages.
- For rural providers and patients- driving time and cost for providers to reach patients or for patients to reach their provider.

Possible Solutions

- Rural tax credits
- Improving Medicaid rates
- Removing GRT for PT's
- Removing PIT (personal income tax) for PT's
- Eliminating licensing fees
- State reimbursement for CEU's
- Housing in rural areas
- Mileage reimbursement/incentives for rural PT's
- More accredited PT/PTA programs
- Student loan forgiveness





New Mexico Department of Higher Education Health Provider Loan Repayment Program (FY23)

Applied: 649

Awarded: 44

Medical Awarded: 8

Allied Awarded: 1 (Physical Therapist)

Mental Health Awarded: 18

Dental Awarded: 2

Nursing Awarded: 15

Typical loan for a graduate of the Doctoral
Physical Therapy Program is over \$127,000.



Thanks & Requests for LHHS

- **Continue to highlight physical therapy as a means of treatment and health disparity prevention for New Mexico families.**
- **Help coordinate and connect healthcare professionals, their representatives, and sponsor legislators to ensure that legislation to attract and retain providers is not introduced in silos.**

Thank you! APTA New Mexico is ready and willing to partner with our provider colleagues across the healthcare professions to advocate for greater incentives to ensure we grow, attract and retain providers in our state.