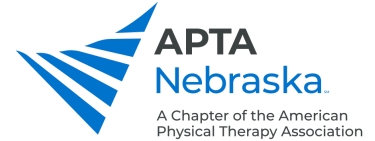


# 2026 Education Conference Information and Schedule

2026 APTA Nebraska Chapter Annual Education Conference  
April 10-11, 2026 | UNMC's Truhlsen Events Center, Omaha NE



## Kickoff Reception & Awards Presentation

April 10, 2026 | 6:30-9 p.m. CT

All registered conference attendees and awardees are invited to join us in kicking off the annual education conference and celebrating the 2026 APTA-NE awardees. Sponsors and exhibitors will be on hand. ***Expect a bar with drink tickets available (for those 21 years or older with ID) and heavy appetizers, a DJ, photo booth and karaoke all included in the cost of the conference registration.***

## Friday Keynote Address

### Therapy of the Soul: Resetting Our Relationship with Work

David Husky, WeThrive Integration Partner

#### + Howie the Therapy Dog

This keynote invites PTs and PTAs to reexamine their relationship with work through a healthier, more sustainable lens. Rather than glorifying constant passion or self-sacrifice, the session explores how purpose and meaning can coexist with boundaries, rest, and personal wellbeing. Attendees will reflect on the difference between meaningful engagement and over-identification with their professional role. Through practical insights and relatable stories, the keynote offers a reframing for how to intentionally care for others and self. Participants will leave with a renewed perspective on how to sustain both their impact and their own wellbeing over the long arc of their careers.

David is a WeTHRIVE Integration Partner and facility dog handler at Children's Nebraska. David (and Howie) provide evidence-based interventions that support the emotional wellbeing and mental health of our workforce. He has a Doctor of Ministry degree in Spiritual Formation, is a board-certified chaplain, certified Critical Incident Stress Debriefing (CISD) facilitator, and has co-authored various peer reviewed articles related to family support, resiliency, and models of care. David and his wife Jill have been married for 36 years and have four adult children and twelve grandchildren.

## 2026 APTA-NE Chapter Annual Education Sessions and Business Meeting

April 11, 2026 | 6:30 a.m. - 4 p.m. CT

- |                                      |                  |
|--------------------------------------|------------------|
| ● Registration & hot breakfast       | 6:30-7:30 a.m.   |
| ● Session 1                          | 7:30-9:30 a.m.   |
| ● Morning break & poster session 1   | 9:30-10:00 a.m.  |
| ● Session 2                          | 10:00-12:00 a.m. |
| ● Lunch & business meeting           | 12:00-1:30 p.m.  |
| ● Afternoon break & poster session 2 | 1:30-2:00 p.m.   |
| ● Session 3                          | 2:00-4:00 p.m.   |

Know before you go:

CHECK-IN: On Friday night and Saturday morning, registration tables will be located in the foyer of the Truhlsen Events Center. **Please come to the registration table when you arrive to pick up your name badge and exhibitor passport card.**

Saturday Meals:

- Hot breakfast will be available from 6:30 AM - 8:30 AM.
- Lunch will be provided (Taco Buffet) with options for Gluten Free, Vegetarian, Dairy Free, Nut Free.
- Light snacks and drinks will be available during the AM and PM breaks.
  - All food is served in the foyer outside of the Truhlsen Events Center.

Session selection and CEUS: Attendees will choose sessions to attend during the day of the conference. All sessions are first come, first serve. If a session reaches capacity, attendees are required to choose a different session to maintain fire and safety codes. To be eligible for CEU credits, attendees will complete the exit survey at the end of each session. CEU credits will be emailed within two weeks of the conference. Participants can earn up to 6 contact hours of CEU credits if they attend all three sessions. However, participants have the option to skip sessions at their own discretion, forfeiting any CEU credits missed.

The business meeting offered in hybrid format is open to all APTE-NE members regardless of conference registration.

Conference pricing includes the kickoff reception and the conference sessions with CEUs.

Pricing dates	Students	APTA-NE Members	Non-Members	Session Speakers	Poster Presenters (up to 2 per poster*)
Early Registration (Now-March 1st, 2026)	\$99	\$149	\$199	\$29	\$50*
Regular Registration (March 2nd-April 10th, 2026)	\$149	\$249	\$299	—	—

\*Pricing for poster presenters is for the first 2 presenters. Any additional presenters are subject to paying the full rate. Only those who present/attend the conference are required to register.

**Accommodations:**

A block of rooms will be available for two nights at a special conference rate: Friday, April 10 and Saturday, April 11.

**The Element Midtown Crossing:** \$134 per night

- [Book your group rate for NPTA 2026 Conference](#)
- Last Day to Book : Wednesday, March 11, 2026

- [Directions](#)

## Programming Options at a Glance

### Session One Options - 7:30-9:30 AM CT

Session Title	Room #
Ready or Not? Beyond Timelines, Return to Sport Testing Best Practices	3001
Empowering Health Through Lifestyle Medicine: Practical Tools for Physical Therapy	3002

### Session Two Options - 10:00 AM-12:00 PM CT

Session Title	Room #
Addressing the Universal Red Flag: Cancer Rehabilitation	3001
From Code to Care: 2026 Ethics Standards in Action for the PT/ PTA Team	3002

### Session Three Options - 2:00 PM-4:00 PM CT

Session Title	Room #
Red Flag Screening and Clinical Decision Making in Physical Therapy	3001
Strengthening Clinical Reasoning in Clinical Education: The CI & Student Partnership	3002

## Programming Options - In Depth

\*References will be presented by the speakers during the conference. Follow up questions about the sessions should be directed towards the speakers.

Session One
<p>Ready or Not? Beyond Timelines, Return to Sport Testing Best Practices</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Speakers: Jed Droge, PT, DPT, OCS, ATC, CSCS and Matt Dewald, PT, DPT, OCS, SCS</li> <li>• Keywords: Return to Sport Testing, Shoulder, Hip, Knee, Ankle</li> <li>• Course Description: Return-to-sport testing is a critical component of rehabilitation, yet current practice often places too much emphasis on timelines and not on criteria. This session will provide physical therapy professionals with a practical, evidence-based framework for RTS testing across a variety of athletic populations. Attendees will explore the strengths and limitations of commonly used measures, including strength, hop, agility, endurance, and psychological readiness assessments. Emphasis will be placed on integrating validity and reliability evidence with clinical decision-making,</li> </ul>

highlighting the risks of relying on timelines or single tests in isolation. Case-based examples will be used to illustrate how clinicians can apply test clusters and workload considerations to support safe and confident return-to-sport decisions. Participants will leave with improved knowledge of best practices and practical tools to incorporate into their own clinical environments, ultimately enhancing outcomes and reducing reinjury risk for athletes of all levels.

- Objectives:
  - Explain the rationale for comprehensive return-to-sport testing in sports rehabilitation.
  - Identify evidence-based test clusters addressing strength, power, agility, and psychological readiness.
  - Apply principles of reliability and validity to select appropriate return to sport measures.
  - Recognize limitations of timelines and single-test decision-making and integrate multidimensional assessment.
  - Apply return to sport testing principles through case-based clinical examples.

#### Empowering Health Through Lifestyle Medicine: Practical Tools for Physical Therapy

- Speakers: Rashelle Hoffman PT, DPT, PhD, GCS; Brad Dexter PT, DPT, NCS; Troy Goetsch PT, DPT, SCS
- Keywords: Lifestyle medicine, health promotion, public health
- Course Description: The United States spends more health care dollars per capita compared to other developed countries, yet sees conversely higher rates of chronic disease. It is estimated that more than 80% of chronic diseases can be mitigated or even prevented by addressing root causes within the lifestyle medicine pillars (i.e., physical activity, nutrition, restorative sleep, stress management, avoidance of risky substances, and social connection). Greater health and quality of life could be achieved by focusing more on lifestyle recommendations and prevention than on the advancement of treatment once chronic diseases have become symptomatic. This educational session will discuss lifestyle medicine approaches across several patient populations and provide tangible ways to embed these strategies in your clinical practice. Attendees will leave with a clearer understanding of how to integrate lifestyle medicine principles in ways that are realistic, impactful, and sustainable.
- Objectives:
  - Define the six core pillars of lifestyle medicine and their relevance to chronic disease prevention and management.
  - Summarize current evidence on the impact of lifestyle medicine in reducing health care costs and improving quality of life.
  - Recognize why physical therapists are uniquely positioned to screen and influence lifestyle medicine factors.
  - Discuss strategies to overcome barriers and assess lifestyle medicine factors within clinical practice.
  - Identify practical, time-efficient ways to embed lifestyle medicine principles into routine physical therapy practice.

#### Session Two

##### Addressing the Universal Red Flag: Cancer Rehabilitation

- Alex Holder, PT, DPT, OPT; Tyler Pribnow, OTD, OTR/L; Kelli Eihusen, PT, DPT, OPT

- **Keywords:** Oncology, Rehabilitation, side-effects, safety
- **Course Description:** This continuing education course provides physical therapists with the knowledge and clinical tools to effectively evaluate and treat individuals with cancer and cancer-related musculoskeletal conditions. Content includes identification of red flags for undiagnosed cancer, the therapist's role in managing functional mobility impairments, and an overview of local and systemic side effects of treatment, including chemotherapy, radiation, gene therapy, and hormonal therapy. Special emphasis will be placed on cancer-related fatigue and essential safety precautions for this population. Participants will also review landmark research that has advanced the oncology specialty, providing an evidence-based foundation for practice. Using a systems-based approach, the course will outline assessment strategies, outcome measures, and rehabilitation considerations across the lymphatic, cardiopulmonary, neurological, musculoskeletal, genitourinary, gastrointestinal, and psychological systems. By the conclusion of this course, participants will gain strategies to improve safety, enhance functional outcomes, and promote quality of life for individuals affected by cancer throughout the continuum of care.
- **Objectives:**
  - Identify red flags for undiagnosed cancer that require referral or further medical evaluation.
  - Explain local and systemic side effects of chemotherapy, radiation, gene therapy, and hormonal therapy, and their implications for rehabilitation.
  - Apply appropriate safety precautions when designing and progressing interventions for patients with cancer.
  - Analyze landmark research findings that have shaped the specialty of oncologic physical therapy.
  - Conduct systems-based assessments and select evidence-based outcome measures across multiple body systems.
  - Develop individualized treatment strategies to optimize function and quality of life in patients affected by cancer.

**From Code to Care: 2026 Ethics Standards in Action for the PT/ PTA Team**

- **Speakers:** Teresa M. Cochran PT, DPT, PhD, FNAP; Karen Abboud PTA, MHA; Betsy J. Becker PT, DPT, PhD; Nancy R. Kirsch PT, DPT, PhD, FAPTA; Gail M. Jensen PT, PhD, FAPTA, FNAP
- **Keywords:** Ethics, Moral decisions, Dilemma, Professional codes
- **Course Description:** The Code of Ethics for the Physical Therapy Profession, adopted by the APTA House of Delegates in July 2025, outlines the ethical obligations of all physical therapists and physical therapist assistants. This revised and unified document introduces consistent, inclusive terminology and addresses contemporary ethical challenges, including payment structures, productivity pressures, and the evolving role of technology. Serving as the foundation for our professional moral community, the Code guides behavior across all roles and practice settings throughout a physical therapy career. It also provides the public with clear ethical standards to which we are accountable. While ethical obligations may sometimes conflict with jurisdictional regulations, professionals are expected to resolve such conflicts in alignment with the values, principles, and standards expressed in the Code. This interactive workshop introduces participants to the revised 2026 Code of Ethics, highlighting its relevance in today's dynamic healthcare environment. Through facilitated discussion and collaborative case analyses, participants will examine how ethical principles inform clinical decision-making, patient advocacy, and professional conduct. Small group activities will focus on dissecting real-world practice and administrative scenarios, identifying ethical conflicts, and applying the updated Code to resolve dilemmas and distressing situations.
- **Objectives:**

- Identify key updates in the 2026 APTA Code of Ethics, including terminology and ethical considerations related to payment, productivity and technology
- Distinguish between ethical obligations and jurisdictional regulations and demonstrate strategies in alignment with the Code for resolving conflicts
- Apply ethical principles from the revised Code to authentic clinical and administrative case scenarios
- Collaborate with peers to evaluate various ethical challenges in the practice of physical therapy

### Session Three

#### Strengthening Clinical Reasoning in Clinical Education: The CI & Student Partnership

- **Speakers:** Heather Knight, PT, DPT, NCS; Jennifer Furze, PT, DPT, FAPTA, PCS; Gail Jensen, PT, PhD, FAPTA; Lauren Plum, PT, DPT, OCS; Nick Weber PT, DPT, OCS, FAAOMPT
- **Keywords:** Clinical Reasoning, Blueprint, Teaching Strategies, Knowledge Translation
- **Course Description:** This session will engage clinical and academic educators, PT students, and PT residents in the shared responsibility of developing practitioners who have strong clinical reasoning abilities. Foundational information on the state of clinical reasoning as a domain of competence will highlight clinical reasoning's essential role in preparing practitioners to meet the complex needs of society. The session will emphasize how educators and learners each play a role in optimizing the learning experience through the use of shared terminology and actively engaging in evidence-informed teaching and learning strategies. Knowledge translation resources for implementation of a published Clinical Reasoning Blueprint will be presented, and attendees will analyze clinical education cases to outline the role students and clinical educators play in developing high-level practitioners.
- **Objectives:**
  - Describe the current state of clinical reasoning as a domain of competence within the continuum of PT education.
  - Utilize terminology from a Clinical Reasoning Blueprint to describe a learner's clinical reasoning abilities.
  - Identify knowledge translation resources relevant to the participant's role that will allow them to focus on clinical reasoning abilities within the clinical environment.
  - Outline strategies that clinical instructors and students can implement in the clinical environment to enhance clinical reasoning.
  - Analyze clinical education cases to identify the role of the student and the role of the educator in optimizing outcomes related to clinical reasoning.

#### Red Flag Screening and Clinical Decision Making in Physical Therapy

- **Speakers:** Jed Droge, PT, DPT, OCS, ATC, CSCS and Matt Dewald, PT, DPT, OCS, SCS
- **Keywords:** Red Flag Screening, Clinical Reasoning
- **Course Description:** Physical therapists are often the first point of contact for patients with musculoskeletal complaints, making it critical to recognize when a presentation suggests a condition beyond the scope of physical therapy. This session is designed to sharpen the physical therapy students' and clinicians' ability to identify, interpret, and act on red flags that may indicate serious pathology. This session combines lecture with interactive, discussion-based activities. It explores key

red flag indicators across various body regions and systemic conditions. Through case-based scenarios, attendees will apply clinical decision-making skills to determine appropriate and effective patient management. Participants will leave with an understanding of essential screening questions, increased confidence in triaging patients, and evidence-based strategies for integrating red flag screening into everyday practice.

- Objectives:
  - Identify red flag indicators across multiple body regions that warrant medical referral.
  - Perform targeted screening assessments that may be used to elicit red flag information during patient evaluation.
  - Apply evidence-based clinical decision-making frameworks to case scenarios in order to determine whether to treat, monitor, or refer.
  - Integrate red flag findings into clinical reasoning to ensure safe and effective patient management.

## Speaker Biographies

Karen Abboud PTA, MHA

- Clarkson College
- Omaha, NE

Ms. Abboud is an Associate Professor in the Associate and Bachelor of Science Physical Therapist Assistant (PTA) programs and served as the Director of Clinical Education and for the Clarkson College collaborative Academic Travel Abroad (ATA) program. Ms. Abboud maintains her clinical skills and practice in the home health and outpatient settings, including lymphedema treatment and Reiki. She has assisted in research and co-presented on PT/PTA collaboration, interprofessional education, and clinical performance assessments. Ms. Abboud provides a teaching focus on ethics and professionalism and collaborates with colleagues from other academic institutions. She serves on the APTA Nebraska Early Professional Special Interest Group (EP SIG) and annual Legislative Day Committee. Ms. Abboud served on the APTA-NE Executive Committee, as the PTA Caucus Representative, and attended the annual APTA House of Delegates meetings (2010-2019), including subcommittee work, and has served as an edition reviewer for multiple textbooks. She received the APTA-NE PTA Clinical Excellence Award in 2020. Ms. Abboud received her AS PTA degree and a master's degree in health care administration, both from Clarkson College. Ms. Abboud completed training as a Certified Lymphedema Therapist (CLT), from the Academy of Lymphatic Studies (ACOLS), in 2010, and a Reiki Level I/II practitioner in 2021 and 2023.

Betsy J. Becker PT, DPT, PhD

- University of Nebraska Medical Center
- Omaha, NE

Dr. Becker is a Professor with Tenure and Program Director of Physical Therapy Education at the University of Nebraska Medical Center (UNMC), where she also chairs the Department of Health and Rehabilitation Sciences. A native of Nebraska, Dr. Becker holds a Master's in Physical Therapy and a PhD from UNMC, as well as a transitional Doctor of Physical Therapy degree from the University of South Dakota. With a strong background in cancer rehabilitation, educational technology, and faculty development, Dr. Becker has contributed to the PT profession as a researcher, author, and speaker at national and international conferences. She has published peer-reviewed manuscripts, edited books, and written book chapters related to her areas of expertise. Dr. Becker's extensive regulatory experience shapes her perspective on the panel. Since 2017, she has served on the Nebraska State Board of Physical Therapy. She is also active in national regulatory work through the Federation of State Boards of Physical Therapy, contributing to key regulatory initiatives since 2012. This breadth of regulatory involvement informs her insights into policy, licensure, and professional practice.

Teresa M. Cochran PT, DPT, PhD, FNAP

- University of Nebraska Medical Center
- Kearney, NE

Dr. Cochran is the CQuence Distinguished Associate Professor for Innovation in Healthcare and Associate Dean for the College of Allied Health Professions at the University of Nebraska Medical Center (UNMC) in Kearney. Dr. Cochran earned MA (psychology) and DPT degrees (University of Nebraska and Creighton University, respectively), and a PhD degree from UNMC. She holds emerita status as a board-certified clinical specialist in geriatric physical therapy (American Board of Physical Therapy Specialties) and was inducted as a Distinguished Practitioner fellow in the Physical Therapy Academy of the National Academies of Practice. Dr. Cochran has delivered over 65 professional presentations at national and international conferences. She has been a member of APTA since 1993 and has served in multiple positions in APTA Nebraska, including Federal Government Affairs Liaison and chapter President; she has chaired the Ethics Committee since 2019.

Matt Dewald, PT, DPT, OCS, SCS

- University of South Dakota
- Vermillion, SD

Matt earned both his B.S. in Psychology and Doctor of Physical Therapy degrees from the University of South Dakota in 2005 and 2008, respectively. He became Board-Certified in Orthopedics in 2012 (recertified in 2022) and Board-Certified in Sports Physical Therapy in 2017. He has completed several other certifications and training mainly related to orthopedic physical therapy and manual therapy.

Matt's clinical experiences have spanned four states over the last 17 years, with a focus on outpatient orthopedics. Over his career he has been blessed with great mentors and has had opportunities to work

alongside many other professionals, in a varying array of interdisciplinary teams. Most recently, his focus has been more academic at the University of South Dakota.

Matt's primary area of teaching is Musculoskeletal Physical Therapy. He is the Director of the Sports Physical Therapy Residency, which is where he maintains the clinical skills needed for his Board Certifications, providing physical therapy to the USD Athletes. Furthermore, Matt is South Dakota's State Representative for the American Academy of Sports Physical Therapists. Matt's research interests revolve around tendon biomechanics and sports injuries.

Brad Dexter PT, DPT, Board-Certified Neurologic Clinical Specialist (ABPTS)

- University of Nebraska Medical Center
- Omaha, NE

Brad Dexter, PT, DPT, is an Assistant Professor with the Physical Therapy Program at the University of Nebraska Medical Center (UNMC) in Omaha, NE. Dexter received his Doctor of Physical Therapy in 2011 from UNMC. Dexter is an active Board member for the Academy of Spinal Cord Injury Professionals. He is a recognized expert in his field of neurologic physical therapy and the evolving practice of physical therapy within a telehealth platform, as evidenced by his contributions to presentations and publications. Prior to joining the core faculty at UNMC, he regularly explored and utilized new technologies for rehabilitation, and was a member of the Research and Development team at QLI in Omaha, NE. His clinical specialties include neurologic rehab and telehealth physical therapy.

Jed Droge, PT, DPT, OCS, ATC, CSCS

- University of South Dakota
- Vermillion

Jed attained a Doctor of Physical Therapy degree from the University of Nebraska Medical Center in 2010, and prior to that, a Bachelor of Science in Athletic Training from Nebraska Wesleyan University. He became Board-Certified in Orthopaedic Physical Therapy in 2013 and has been a Certified Strength and Conditioning Specialist from the National Strength and Conditioning Association since 2008. Service to the physical therapy profession has always been important to him. Prior to moving to South Dakota to join USD, he was lucky enough to hold many different positions within the Nebraska Chapter of the American Physical Therapy Association. This time was very rewarding to him on both a professional and a personal level, allowing him to befriend many incredibly talented leaders with a passion for excellence. In 2014, Jed's efforts on behalf of the association were recognized with an APTA Emerging Leader Award. Jed's clinical practice experience has been in rural, critical access hospitals, allowing him to create a wide-ranging skillset. While at these facilities, he benefited from exceptional leaders both inside and outside of the physical therapy profession. These individuals pushed him into growth as a professional and helped him to better understand the complex factors that influence health outcomes. He routinely uses this clinical background to facilitate learning in the students he engages with.

Kelli Eihusen, PT, DPT, CLT, Board Certified Specialist in Oncology Physical Therapy

- Madonna Rehabilitation Hospital Hospital
- Lincoln, NE

Kelli Eihusen PT, DPT, CLT is a dedicated outpatient physical therapist specializing in oncology rehabilitation at Madonna Rehabilitation Outpatient Therapy Services. She earned her Doctorate in Physical Therapy from the University of Nebraska Medical Center in 2015 and has since developed a diverse background in clinical care, research, and program development across both pediatric and adult oncology populations.

Kelli began her career as the lead pediatric oncology outpatient physical therapist at Children’s Nebraska, where she played a key role in establishing the pediatric oncology rehabilitation program. In 2020, she joined Lincoln Cancer Rehabilitation, expanding her expertise to adult oncology care and contributing to a multidisciplinary breast cancer clinic.

Currently, Kelli leads the development of the outpatient oncology rehabilitation program at Madonna Rehabilitation’s Lincoln Campus while continuing to provide direct patient care. She is a passionate advocate for improved access to oncology rehabilitation services, actively engaging at both the local and state levels—including testimony before the Nebraska State Legislature.

Kelli has been invited to present on oncology rehabilitation at institutions such as the University of Nebraska Medical Center, Kansas University, and the Nebraska Student Special Interest Group (NSSIG). In 2022, she became the first physical therapist in Nebraska to earn the Oncology Clinical Specialist designation, recognizing her advanced clinical expertise in the field.

Jennifer Furze, PT, DPT, FAPTA, PCS

- Creighton University
- Omaha, NE

Dr. Furze is a Professor in the Department of Physical Therapy at Creighton University in Omaha, NE. She is a board-certified clinical specialist in pediatric physical therapy and the director of the Creighton University Pediatric Physical Therapy Residency program. Nationally, she served as the past Director of Academic and Clinical Education of APTA Pediatrics and member of the ABPTS Pediatric Specialty Council. She has taught pediatrics in a systems-based lifespan approach model of the curriculum for 20 years. Her published educational research centers around clinical reasoning in professional and residency education, effective teaching methods, and pediatric physical therapy education. Dr. Furze received her entry-level Doctor of Physical Therapy degree from Creighton University in 1998 and her bachelor’s degree from the University of Scranton in 1995.

Troy Goetsch PT, DPT, Board-Certified Sports Clinical Specialist (ABPTS)

- Drive Wellness & Physio Co
- Lincoln, NE

Dr. Troy Goetsch is a physical therapist, health and performance coach based in Lincoln, Nebraska. He earned his Doctor of Physical Therapy degree from the University of Nebraska Medical Center and has since focused his clinical career on bridging the gap between rehabilitation and long-term performance. He is the founder of Drive Wellness & Physio Co, a hybrid practice that integrates physical therapy, performance training, and lifestyle medicine principles to help active individuals improve health, movement, and longevity. His professional interests include movement and strength training, behavior change, and proactive approaches to recovery and wellness. In addition to clinical care, Dr. Goetsch is active in community engagement and education, engaging locally on topics of movement, mindset, and sustainable health practices.

Rashelle Hoffman PT, DPT, PhD, Board-Certified Geriatric Clinical Specialist (ABPTS)

- Creighton University
- Omaha, NE

Dr. Hoffman is an assistant professor at Creighton University's Omaha Campus. Following her DPT at the University of Nebraska Medical Center, she went on to complete the Geriatric Physical Therapy Residency Program at Creighton University and is a Board Certified Geriatric Clinical Specialist. Additionally, she obtained a PhD at the University of Nebraska Medical Center, followed by a Postdoctoral Fellowship at the University of Colorado Anschutz Medical Campus. She has clinical experience in skilled nursing, outpatient, long-term care, and home health care settings. Her research and scholarly activities span neuroimaging and behavioral outcomes as well as lifestyle medicine approaches to enhance mobility and quality of life with aging.

Alex Holder, PT, DPT, Board Certified Clinical Specialist in Oncologic Physical Therapy

- Madonna Rehabilitation Hospital
- Omaha, NE

Alex Holder, DPT, Board-Certified Clinical Specialist in Oncologic Physical Therapy (ABPTS), is a Doctor of Physical Therapy practicing in the Oncology Unit at Madonna Rehabilitation Hospital—Omaha, a facility accredited by the Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF). She earned her undergraduate degree from the University of Nebraska—Lincoln and completed her Doctor of Physical Therapy (DPT) degree at the University of Nebraska Medical Center in 2019. A recently board-certified in oncologic physical therapy Alex is committed to delivering compassionate, evidence-based care that empowers oncology patients to improve their function and quality of life.

Gail Jensen, PT, PhD, FAPTA

- Creighton University
- Omaha, NE

Dr. Jensen is Vice Provost for Learning and Assessment, Dean Emerita, and Professor of Physical Therapy and holds a secondary appointment in the Department of Medical Humanities at Creighton University. She is known nationally and internationally for scholarly contributions in expert practice, clinical reasoning, professional ethics, and interprofessional education. Dr. Jensen is author or coauthor of over 100 publications in peer-reviewed journals and has coauthored 15 books including Educating Physical Therapists, Clinical Reasoning and Decision Making in Physical Therapy and in 2025, the fifth edition of Clinical Reasoning in the Health Professions. Dr. Jensen has been instrumental in the creation and implementation of Grant Writing and Mentorship in Education Research (GAMER) national initiative in physical therapy, now in its fifth year. Dr. Jensen received her PhD in educational evaluation with a minor in sociology from Stanford University. She holds a master's degree in physical therapy from Stanford University and a bachelor's degree in education from the University of Minnesota.

Nancy R. Kirsch PT, DPT, PhD, FAPTA

- Rutgers University
- Newark NJ

Dr. Kirsch is Professor in the Doctor of Physical Therapy program and Chair, Rehabilitation and Movement Sciences, School of Health Professions at Rutgers University, Newark NJ. She is a former member of APTA's Ethics and Judicial Committee. She also practices in northern New Jersey, and her book "Ethics in Physical Therapy: A Case-Based Approach" compiles some of the best of her magazine columns.

Heather Knight, PT, DPT, NCS

- Creighton University
- Omaha, NE

Dr. Knight is an Associate Professor and Director of Post Professional Education in the Department of Physical Therapy at Creighton University in Omaha, NE. She has been a Board-Certified Neurologic Clinical Specialist (ABPTS) since 2011 and involved in teaching concepts related to neurologic rehabilitation in professional and post professional education for over 12 years. Her scholarship has focused on clinical reasoning and blending evidence-based practice for neurologic rehabilitation with best practices in teaching and learning across the continuum of PT education. She is actively engaged in the Academies of Neurologic Physical Therapy (ANPT) and Physical Therapy Education (APTE) which has resulted in a special interest in knowledge translation and implementation science within these specialty areas. Dr. Knight completed post professional training through Kaiser Permanente's Neurologic PT Residency Program in 2010, received a Doctorate in Physical Therapy from Creighton University in 2008, and obtained a bachelor's in science in Kinesiology from Arizona State University in 2005.

Lauren Plum , PT, DPT, OCS

- Creighton University
- Omaha, NE

Dr. Plum is an Assistant Professor and the Director of Clinical Education in the Department of Physical Therapy at Creighton University in Omaha, NE. Dr. Plum teaches in the Professional Formation course series and serves as a Level 1 Credentialed Clinical Trainer in the APTA's Credentialed Clinical Instructor Program. She has previously served as adjunct faculty and a guest lecturer in topics ranging from rural healthcare to trauma-informed care and transgender care at both the University of Iowa and Des Moines University. In addition to her teaching roles, she currently involved in data collection in the dissertation phase of her Ph.D. in Education from Drake University in Des Moines, IA. Dr. Plum's research interests include PT program admissions committee decision-making, hidden curriculum, and ways to improve access, diversity, inclusion, and belonging in PT. She holds an ABPTS board certification in Orthopaedic Physical Therapy, as well as additional certifications in dry needling and trauma-informed care. She has mentored students across disciplines (PT, PTA, MD, and PA) while working in a variety of settings, including outpatient orthopedics, pelvic health, acute care, and skilled care.

Tyler Pribnow, OTD, OTR/L

- Madonna Rehabilitation Hospital
- Omaha, NE

Tyler Pribnow is an Occupational Therapist at Madonna Rehabilitation Hospitals in Omaha, Nebraska with over 10 years of experience. Grew up on a farm in Scribner, Nebraska. Graduated from the University of Nebraska at Omaha with a bachelor's degree in Exercise Science. Later attended Creighton University where he received a Doctorate of Occupational Therapy. He started his career as an Occupational Therapist working in a Skilled Nursing Facility and Home Health, before becoming employed at Madonna Rehabilitation Hospital as an Occupational Therapist on the Burn Unit and Spinal Cord Injury Unit. His current roles at Madonna Rehabilitation Hospitals are Occupational Therapy Practitioner on an Oncology Unit, Spinal Cord Injury Program Leader and Assistive Technology Specialist. His interests lie in the area of mentoring on the topic of rehabilitation and spinal cord injury and educating on new technology that can improve one's independence.

Nick Weber PT, DPT, OCS, FAAOMPT

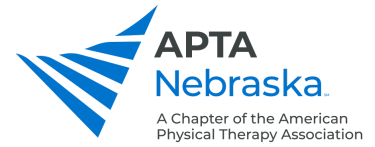
- Creighton University
- Omaha, NE

Dr. Weber is a board-certified clinical specialist in orthopedic physical therapy and fellow of the American Academy of Orthopedic Manual Therapists. Dr. Weber is an assistant professor in the Department of Physical Therapy at Creighton University teaching content in advanced imaging, gait, and management of musculoskeletal disorders. He also serves as director of Creighton University's orthopedic residency program. With a decade of experience in outpatient physical therapy, his clinical practice focuses on the management of

adults with spine and sports related injuries. Dr. Weber is also passionate about service and promoting our profession. Currently, he serves as President of the Nebraska Chapter of the American Physical Therapy Association.

# 2026 Education Conference

## Poster Abstracts



### **01. Building Community-Engaged Capacity to Advance Telerehabilitation Services for Patients with Chronic Disease and/or Disability**

Brad Dexter, Andrew Lindemeier

*University of Nebraska Medical Center, Omaha, Nebraska.*

**Purpose:** This report was developed to capture insights from clinicians, patients, and families who have experienced or delivered telehealth services over the past four years. The rapid rise of telehealth during the COVID-19 pandemic presented both challenges and opportunities, but as the initial surge subsided, its continued application in physical therapy has become less clear. This report explores what has worked well in telerehabilitation, identifies ongoing challenges, and provides actionable recommendations to bridge gaps in service delivery. By reflecting on these experiences, this work aims to inform the development of sustainable models that will advance physical therapy practice, improve patient outcomes, and support policy development moving forward.

**Description:** This project aimed to build capacity and understanding across clinical teams, patients, and caregivers around the use of telerehabilitation as a sustainable, patient-centered model of care. Recognizing that patients are the ultimate recipients of care, the initiative prioritized patient engagement, experience, equity, and outcomes as key components of value in telerehabilitation delivery.

**Summary of Use:** Over a 12-month period, we convened a multidisciplinary team of clinical stakeholders and patient partners to identify evidence-based telerehabilitation practices in a remote service delivery model and how these are implemented. The project included retrospective patient demographic review, stakeholder discussion settings, and quarterly reflection meetings. This initiative fostered shared learning between patients and providers and emphasized care strategies tailored to the unique needs of individuals in underserved communities. Key themes to emerge were primarily in regards to education—educating and equipping providers to more effectively and confidently deliver care via telehealth, educating clinics on the benefits of giving their patients a choice between in person or hybrid care, and educating patient populations/communities on the availability of telehealth services.

### **02. Improvement in Overall Functionality of Patients Post Cerebrovascular Accident Who Utilize Aquatic Therapy**

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Stroke remains a leading cause of long-term disability, impacting functional mobility, independence, and overall quality of life. Traditional rehabilitation approaches often focus on land-based interventions; however, aquatic therapy has emerged as a complementary treatment that leverages the unique properties of water to help facilitate movement, reduce joint stress, and improve functional outcomes.

This review examined recent clinical trials and systematic analyses comparing aquatic therapy with conventional land-based therapy in post-stroke populations. Studies consistently demonstrated that aquatic therapy enhances balance, gait, lower limb strength, and functional ambulation while also contributing to improvements in mood, pain

management, and overall quality of life. Outcomes such as increased knee extension torque, improved coordination, reduced fall risk, and enhanced emotional status were reported across diverse treatment protocols.

The findings suggest that aquatic therapy offers significant clinical benefits for stroke rehabilitation, particularly in improving mobility and reducing secondary complications associated with immobility. While accessibility remains limited by facility resources, incorporating aquatic therapy into rehabilitation programs provides patients with opportunities to perform exercises otherwise restricted by pain, spasticity, or weakness in land-based settings.

**Conclusion:** Aquatic therapy is an effective, evidence-supported intervention that can positively influence functional recovery and quality of life in stroke survivors. Further research is warranted to standardize treatment protocols and expand accessibility, but current evidence supports its integration into comprehensive rehabilitation programs.

### **03. Assessing Physical Work Readiness in Youth with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities**

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**Purpose/Hypothesis:** This study used a screener to assess the physical work capacity of adolescents and young adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) and compared it to the exertional demands of their preferred jobs. We hypothesized that some students would have insufficient work capacity for their job goals, indicating a need for targeted physical therapy interventions.

**Subjects:** Fifty-three adolescents and young adults with I/DD enrolled in the Nebraska EmpolyABILITY program at the University of Nebraska Medical Center's Munroe-Meyer Institute.

**Materials/Methods:** Participants completed a physical therapy screen including weighted lifting tasks, functional movement testing, walking endurance, and grip strength. Based on Social Security Administration exertional definitions, students were classified as having sedentary, light, medium, or heavy work capacity. Reported job interests were compared to these classifications to identify potential mismatches.

**Results:** Of the 53 students screened, 7 (13%) were classified as sedentary, 27 (51%) as light, and 19 (36%) as medium; none met criteria for heavy work. Most students were physically able to meet the demands of light or medium work with or without reasonable accommodations, aligning with some job interests. However, some students interested in heavy and medium-demand jobs were classified as sedentary or light, suggesting that additional strength and endurance training could improve job readiness.

**Conclusions/Clinical Relevance:** Physical therapists can play a key role in identifying exertional limitations and designing interventions that build work capacity. Embedding PT in transition planning may help youth with I/DD meet physical job demands and improve access to competitive employment.

### **04. Building Community Partnerships and Bridging PT and PTA Program Experiences**

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**Purpose:** The purpose of this experience was to build community partnerships and bridge physical therapist (PT) and physical therapist assistant (PTA) partnerships in service with a community owned and led organization. An opportunity presented to strengthen an existing PTA community partnership and to practice the different roles of PTs and PTAs by practicing the elements of care. PT and PTA students were tasked to practice effective written and verbal communication through collaborative “warm handoffs” discussing client evaluations performed by PT students. The PTA students then made treatment decisions based on the plan of care. Students and faculty applied ethical and professional judgement in communication, decision making, and problem solving during the sharing of client evaluations and collaborative treatment planning. All discussed and enacted a team-based approach to patient-centered care.

**Description:** Sixteen years ago, the Clarkson PTA program formed a partnership with MS Forward, a community center serving people with neurological conditions. Later, the College of Saint Mary’s Hybrid DPT program and Clarkson’s PTA program saw the need to provide PT evaluations for MS Forward clients, creating new opportunities for professional learning. This collaboration allowed center members to receive PT evaluations from PT students, PT students to gain valuable experience collaborating with community members who have neurological conditions, and PTA students to interpret evaluations, make treatment decisions based on the plan of care and provide interventions. It also encouraged PT and PTA students to collaborate intraprofessionally. MS Forward benefited by expanding its community health partnerships in support of clients.

In this model, DPT students performed client evaluations during the first hour, followed by circuit training led by MS Forward trainers, with students staying alongside their clients. Preparation for this collaboration included specific course content, assignments, and simulations designed to help students from both programs learn to work together. Joint sessions between MS forward leadership, clients, and faculty, and between PT and PTA students and faculty allowed all to connect and coordinate care before the students’ hands-on experience. Reflections from students, faculty, and community partners have shown that these partnerships are valuable for everyone involved, especially for distance learners.

**Summary of Use:** This experience serves as a model for fostering sustainable community partnerships and enhancing service delivery in residential or hybrid physical therapy programs. It highlights a collaborative initiative between PT and PTA programs that advanced health equity, intraprofessional education, and evidence-based practice through team-based care. Emphasizing a neuromusculoskeletal and fitness-forward approach, the project enriched student learning while demonstrating leadership in action—where community members, faculty, staff, trainers and students dynamically led and followed throughout its development and implementation.