

News & Updates

November 26, 2025 | Issue 303



CMS Finalizes Fee Schedule Pay Bump for the First Time in 5 Years

Most PTs will see an average 1.75% increase in payment in 2026, however APTA continues to fight for comprehensive Medicare reform.

The U.S. Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services finalized a 3.26% increase to the conversion factor in the [final Medicare Part B Physician Fee Schedule for 2026](#), resulting in physical therapists, on average, receiving a 1.75% increase in reimbursement under the fee schedule.

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FPTA Member Spotlight

Melissa Lazinski, PT, DPT

This week, our member spotlight is Dr. Melissa Lazinski, winner of the Excellence in Academic Teaching Award at our 2025 Annual Conference.

Professional Background

What inspired you to pursue a career in physical therapy/physical therapy assisting?

This was a long time ago, but initially when I started college, I thought I wanted to be a research biologist, so I was majoring in microbiology. Then I met a girl in my science classes who was going to be a physical therapist. I didn't even know what that was, but it sounded interesting. The only healthcare jobs I knew were physician or nurse. The next time I was home I volunteered in the rehab department at the hospital. Once I spent time watching the PTs work and talking with the patients, I knew I wanted to pivot. When I went back to school, I set a goal to apply to major in PT.

How long have you been practicing, and what setting do you currently work in?

I majored in physical therapy, and my entry-level degree was a bachelor's. Those degrees have not been offered for quite some time. In fact, 1999 was the last year the University of Florida awarded a bachelor's in physical therapy, and that was the year I graduated. I have now been a physical therapist for 26 years. During the first half of my career, I worked in clinical practice across a variety of settings. Since 2011, I have been teaching physical therapy. Currently, I serve as the program director of the DPT program at the University of South Florida in Tampa.

What's your favorite part of working with patients or clients?

My clients are now my students. I always try to make the classroom fun, but my favorite part of working with my students is getting to work one on one with them. I especially enjoy mentoring them toward their professional goals like residency or advocacy. These are the times I feel like I can make an impact on the direction of their career and the kind of physical therapist they ultimately become.

Professional Involvement

How has being a member of APTA/FPTA benefited you professionally or personally?

My membership has always help me see that I am part of something bigger. I was with one of my students at the Fall conference this year. As we were talking, I said hello to multiple people and pointed out several others to her and explained their roles in the FPTA. It helped me see through her eyes something that I have grown to take for granted and that is the excellent community of professionals we have in the state of Florida. Being part of that community has helped me in my career clinically and now in academia through the contacts I have made and the mentoring I have received from other members.

What advice would you give to students or early-career PTs/PTAs?

Be a member and get involved. This profession will be what you make of it! Start small with a committee, special interest group, or local district meeting. The pressures facing healthcare and physical therapy will not be eased by sitting on the side lines. We all have different strengths we can bring to the table that collectively can make a difference.

What do you think are the biggest opportunities or challenges facing the field right now?

I believe the greatest challenge facing our profession is the economic viability of a career in physical therapy. Reimbursement rates continue to decline, while the cost of education

keeps rising. Addressing reimbursement requires ongoing advocacy and a consistent effort to influence legislation, so that physical therapists are compensated fairly for their services. The rising cost of education is a deeply personal concern for me. If we want our profession to have a bright future, we must ensure a steady supply of PTs and PTAs to meet growing demands. Delivering high-value education while keeping it affordable is a significant challenge. However, I am confident that it is not only necessary and vital for our profession's survival—it is also achievable.

Fun & Personal Side

If you could have dinner with any historical or famous figure, who would it be and why?

If I could share a meal with any historical figure, I would choose Elizabeth I. As a female monarch, which was controversial to say the least, she overcame immense adversity and led England through a period of dramatic change. Her intelligence, resilience, and vision set her apart as a remarkable leader. I would love to hear firsthand how she navigated political intrigue, made difficult decisions, and inspired loyalty in her people—especially as a woman facing unique challenges. Her perspective on leadership and perseverance would be both fascinating and incredibly valuable.

What do you enjoy doing when you're not at work?

I am an avid gardener with a passion for Florida native plants. I prefer ornamental gardening using native plants over vegetable gardening, but I do both. Planting native plants supports our unique ecosystem and provides homes and food to our animals and insects. I love to see all the species that I attract with my plants. One of my favorites is native firebush which attracts all types of butterflies and bees and birds eat its berries. When I am not at work, you can find me working in my yard covered in dirt or just relaxing and taking it in.

New Research Shows Collaborative Care for Plantar Heel Pain Leads to Long-Term Savings and Better Outcomes

A multi-year study led by Shane McClinton, P.T., D.P.T., Ph.D., shows that combining physical therapy with standard podiatry care for plantar heel pain improves patients' quality of life while also cutting long-term health care costs. McClinton is a physical therapist at Des Moines University Clinic — Physical Therapy and also teaches at Des Moines University Medicine and Health Sciences.

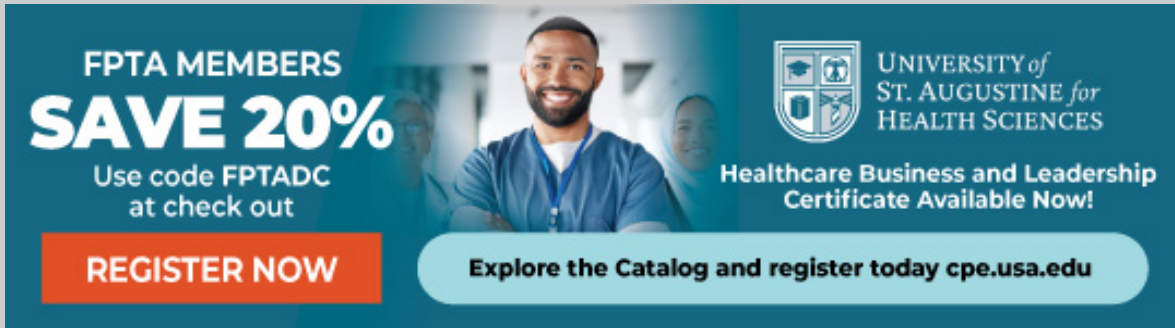
The research project, “Cost Effectiveness of Physical Therapist Treatment in Addition to Usual Podiatry Management of Plantar Heel Pain,” followed 95 participants over a three-year period to assess the direct and indirect costs associated with different treatment protocols. The study was published in *PTJ: Physical Therapy & Rehabilitation Journal*.

McClinton, the lead researcher on the project, notes that while initial costs were slightly higher for the combination treatment due to additional PT visits, these costs were quickly offset by downstream savings.

“Our findings suggest that by the one-year mark, the collaborative approach — podiatry care plus physical therapy — becomes more cost-effective,” McClinton says. “Patients experienced better overall outcomes, were more productive at work and had fewer instances of seeking additional care for their condition or other conditions, in general.”

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Upcoming Events

DECEMBER 1 ZOOM Meeting

4th Quarter PTA Meeting

- Date: December 1, 2025
- Time: 7:00 PM
- Location: Zoom
- Recurrence: Quarterly
- Description: Join us for the PTA's quarterly meeting via Zoom. Agenda will be sent closer to the date.

JANUARY 17-18, 2026 Bradenton, FL

APTA Credentialed Clinical Instructor Program – Level 1 Certification Course

Event Dates & Times:

- Saturday, January 17th, 2026 | 8:00 AM – 5:30 PM (ET)
- Sunday, January 18th, 2026 | 8:00 AM – 5:00 PM (ET)

Location:

Manatee Memorial Hospital
206 2nd St. E
Bradenton, FL 34208

Trainer:

Gina Musolino, PT, DPT, EdD, MSED

[Register](#)

FEBRUARY 28 - MARCH 1, 2026 Bradenton, FL

APTA Credentialed Clinical Instructor Program – Level 1 Certification Course

Event Dates & Times:

- Saturday, February 28th, 2026 | 8:00 AM – 5:30 PM (ET)
- Sunday, March 1st, 2026 | 8:00 AM – 5:00 PM (ET)

Location:

Keiser University - Lakeland, FL
2400 Interstate Drive
Lakeland, FL 33805

Trainer:

Gina Musolino, PT, DPT, EdD, MSED

[Register](#)



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50TH ANNIVERSARY
Celebration

Saturday, December 6, 2025
at 6:00PM

FIU Modesto Madique Campus
Graham Center Ballroom
11200 SW 8th Street
Miami FL 33199



RSVP here
Space is limited



2025 FPT-PAC

The money raised for the Florida Physical Therapy Political Action Committee (FPT-PAC) will be used in our efforts to modernize the Practice Act in Florida. The Florida Practice Act governs every physical therapist and physical therapist assistant in the state. We need your support to modernize the act and remove barriers to providing physical therapy services. [Donate Today](#)

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