

APTA Specialist Certification
Governed by **ABPTS**

Power Your Practice With APTA Specialist Certification

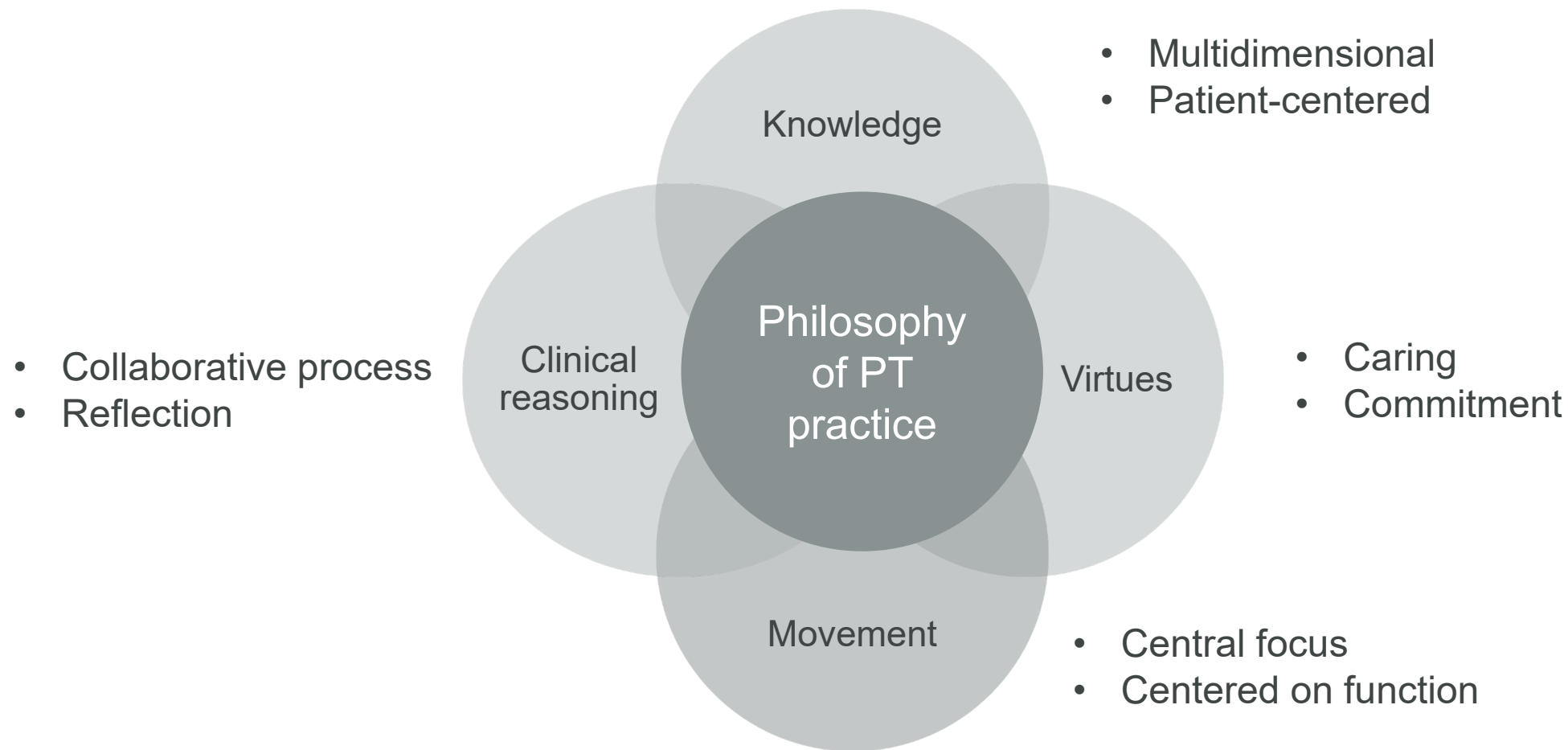


In this presentation, we'll:

1. Discuss the role of specialist certification in advancing your clinical practice and our profession.
2. Describe the current areas of specialty practice.
3. Provide an overview and describe the process for APTA Specialist Certification and Maintenance of Specialist Certification.
4. Describe the minimum eligibility requirements and the role of clinical residencies.
5. Identify top motivations to pursue specialist certification.



Dimensions of Clinical Excellence



Jensen GM et al. Phys Ther. 2000;80(1):28-43



Pathways to Clinical Excellence

- Entry-level degree.
- Years of experience.
- Continuing education.
- Postprofessional residency.
- Postprofessional degrees.
- Postprofessional certifications.
- **Specialization – board certification!**



What Is Clinical Specialization?

A formal process established to:

- Recognize physical therapists with **advanced** clinical knowledge, experience, and skills in a special area of practice.
- Help consumers and the health care community identify physical therapists who are specialists.
- Address a specific area of patient need.

Key Elements of Board Certification

Voluntary

You decide

Unrestrictive

Does not
prohibit others

Coordinated

All areas of
specialization
managed by
a central
mechanism:
ABPTS



What Does Clinical Specialization Require?

- Broad-based foundation of physical therapist education and clinical practice.
- Depth and breadth of knowledge in a specialty area.
- Advanced clinical expertise and skills.



Purpose of Board Certification

- Recognize specialists through established testing methods to ensure a defensible process, and a reliable and valid examination.
- Promote the highest possible level of physical therapist care, and ongoing development of the science and art underlying each specialty practice.
- Inform stakeholders of physical therapists who are certified in a specialty area.

Areas of Physical Therapist Practice Recognized Through APTA Specialist Certification

1. Cardiovascular and Pulmonary
2. Clinical Electrophysiology
3. Geriatrics
4. Neurology
5. Oncology
6. Orthopaedics
7. Pediatrics
8. Sports
9. Women's Health
10. Wound Management

Minimum Eligibility Requirements for Specialist Certification

- **Current permanent/unrestricted license** to practice physical therapy in the United States, District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, or Virgin Islands.
- **2,000 hours** minimum of **direct patient care**:
 - As a licensed physical therapist **in the specialty area**.
 - 25% (500 hours) of which must have occurred in the last three years.



Minimum Eligibility Requirements for Specialist Certification

Direct patient care must include activities:

- In each element of the patient and client management model, as defined in APTA's "Guide to Physical Therapist Practice."
- Included in the "Description of Specialty Practice."

Other Eligibility Requirements

Specific to the specialty:

- Cardiovascular and Pulmonary: ACLS certification; data analysis project or case study.
- Clinical Electrophysiologic: Patient reports.
- Sports: Acute management of injury and illness certification.
- Oncology, Women's Health, and Wound Management: Case study.



Residency Option for Meeting the Eligibility Requirements for Specialist Certification

Complete an [APTA-Accredited Clinical Residency](#):

- All specialty councils allow completion of an APTA-accredited clinical residency to replace all or a portion of the practice eligibility requirements.
- Programs are postprofessional clinical and didactic education designed to advance the physical therapist's skill in a defined practice area.
- Residency curriculum is designed using the “Description of Specialty Practice.”



Board Examination

- Developed by the specialty councils in collaboration with the National Board of Medical Examiners.
- A rigorous, criterion-referenced exam that tests the application and synthesis of
 - Advanced knowledge.
 - Clinical skills and reasoning.

Where To Start

- Description of Specialty Practice:
 - **Self-assess your strengths and weaknesses.**
 - Consider patient populations that are familiar and not as familiar.
- Develop a plan and strategy to prepare.
 - Your patients are your best teachers!

Description of Specialty Practice

- Describes the advanced knowledge, skills, and abilities for clinical practice in a specialty area.
- Is based on the results of an extensive practice analysis conducted by specialty councils and approved by ABPTS.
- Guides the development of the certification exam.

Components of the Examination*

- Patient Care.
- Teaching.
- Administration.
- Consultation.
- Communication.
- Interpretation of research.

*As defined by a specific DSP.

Path to Clinical Specialization





Preparing for the Board Certification Examination

1. Continuously review and adapt your “path.”
2. Use resources from APTA academies:*
 - Recommended textbooks.
 - Reading lists.
 - Advanced clinical practice courses.
3. Join a study group.
4. Seek the guidance of a mentor.
5. Attend continuing education.

*ABPTS does not approve or review material or course content.

Specialist Certification Application Process

Online Application

At abpts.org

Deadlines for exams

July 1: Cardiovascular and Pulmonary, Clinical Electrophysiology, Oncology, Women's Health, and Wound Management

July 31: All other specialties

All applications are reviewed

By APTA Certifications Staff

Specialist Certification Fees

	APTA Member	Nonmember
Application Review	\$525	\$870
Examination	\$810	\$1,535
Total	\$1,335	\$2,405

Board certification is valid for 10 years.

Possible Sources of Financial Assistance

- Continuing education funds through your employer.
- Scholarships, such as the Academy of Pediatric Physical Therapy's Carol Gildenberg Dichter Memorial Fund Scholarship.

When the Certification Exam Is Administered

- Once per year, over a two-week exam period.
- 2022 candidates may sit for the exam between **February 26 and March 12.**

Examination Format

- Computerized exams, administered at Prometric test centers worldwide (prometric.com).
- Multiple choice questions including case scenarios, videos, and pictures.

Recognition of Certified Clinical Specialists

- Opening ceremony of APTA Combined Sections Meeting.
- APTA academies and state chapters.
- Inclusion in online directory of board-certified clinical specialists.
- Only individuals who have successfully completed the ABPTS certification process may use the term “**Board-Certified Clinical Specialist.**”

Maintenance of Specialists Certification: Purpose and Model

- MOSC more effectively verifies current competence as an advanced practitioner in the specialty area.
- More effectively evaluates professional development and clinical experience.
- Better encourages ongoing education and professional growth.
- Keeps pace with the rapidly expanding specialty knowledge base and scientific evidence that guides clinical decision-making.
- Promotes improved health outcomes related to physical therapist specialty services.

Maintenance of Specialist Certification

Certification Cycle

Year

3

6

9

10



Life-long learning and professional development



Cognitive expertise



Licensure and professional standing



Practice performance and clinical care and reasoning





Minimum Eligibility Requirements of MOSC

- **Evidence of current licensure** as a physical therapist in the United States, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico or the Virgin Islands.
- **Direct patient care in the specialty area:**
 - Evidence of 200 hours of direct patient care in the specialty practice within each three-year submission period.
 - For sports specialists only, 33 of 200 hours in venue coverage.
 - Hours accrued in year 10 applied to the next three-year submission period.
- **Sports specialization requires courses in CPR and Acute Management of Injury and Illness.**



Minimum Eligibility Requirements of MOSC

Commitment to Life-Long Learning Through Professional Development

- Mimics the information captured in the current PDP (professional services, continuing education coursework, publications, presentations, clinical supervision and consultation, research, clinical instruction, teaching).
- Minimum requirements for each three-year submission period across three designated activity areas.
- Minimum of 10 MOSC credits, within two of three designated activity categories, in years 3, 6, and 9. By year 9, accrual of at least 30 MOSC credits, and demonstrated professional development in each of the three designated activity categories.
- Credits accrued in year 10 applied to the next three-year submission period.
- A web-based submission/tracking system.
- **Completion of an accredited residency or fellowship program meets all requirements for one MOSC cycle.**



Minimum Eligibility Requirements of MOSC

Practice performance through examples of clinical care and clinical reasoning:

- Online submission of one reflective portfolio for each three-year submission period.
- Demonstration of the clinical care and reasoning used and reflection on how a patient case(s) has impacted practice.
- Not scored, but screened for completion of required information and reflection.

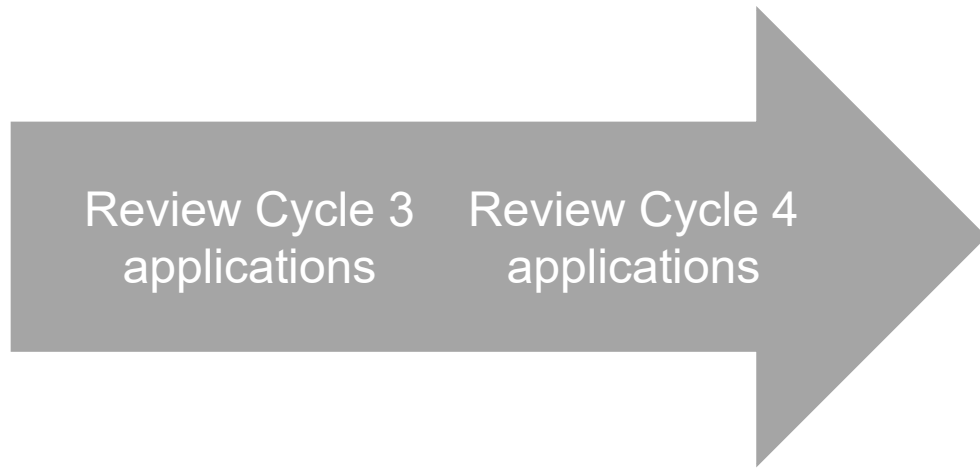


Minimum Eligibility Requirements of MOSC

Cognitive Expertise Through a Test of Knowledge in the Profession:

- Non-proctored, open-resource recertification examination.
- Comprises approximately 100 items in year 10.
- Exam blueprint mirrors initial certification exam but reflects contemporary specialist practice and allows for demonstration of continued competency in general areas of the profession (professional roles, responsibilities, values).
- Requires successful completion of requirements 1-3 at each three-year submission period.
- Two attempts are permitted without loss of credential.

MOSC Examination



Cycle 3 Review
July 1-Aug. 31

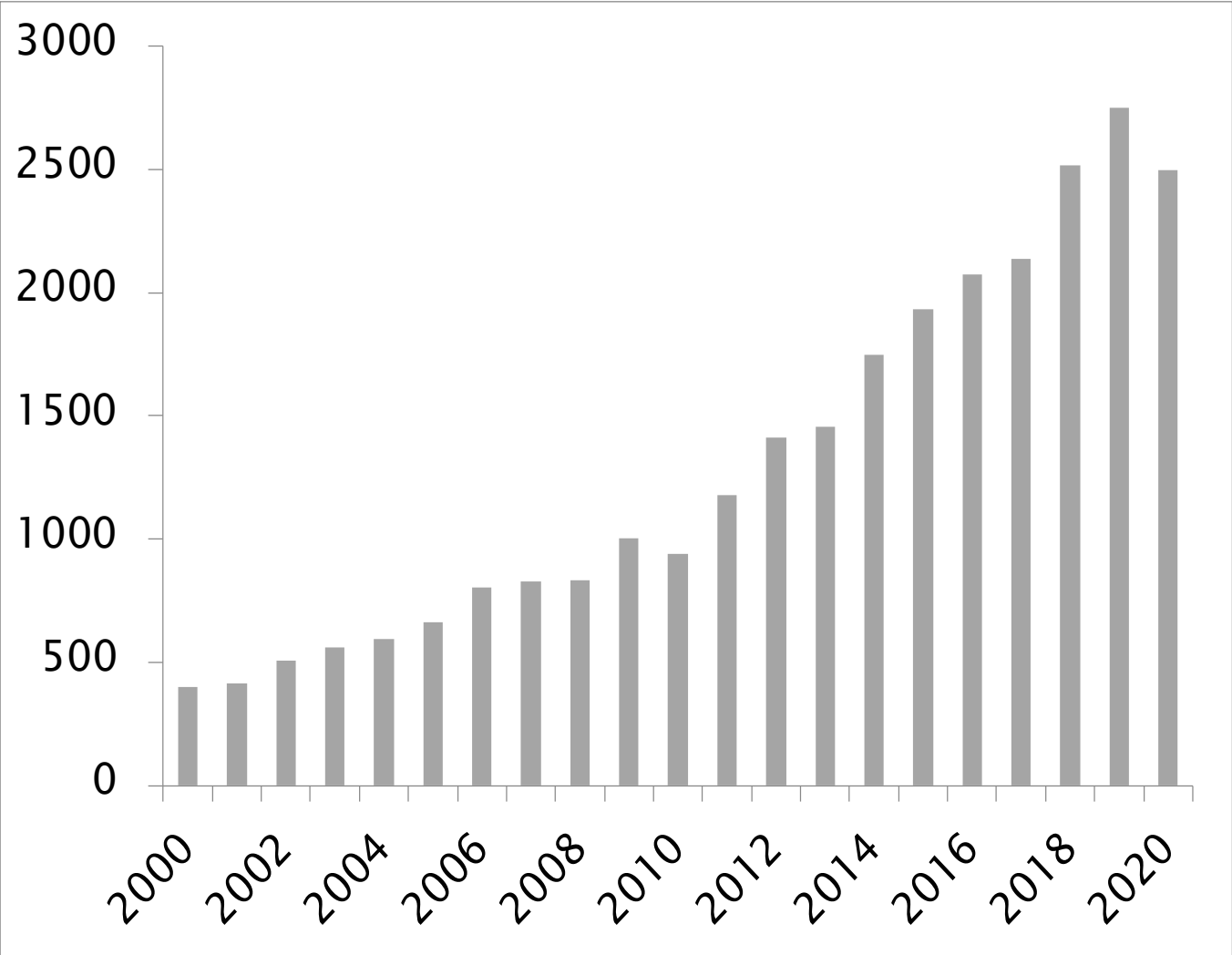
Cycle 4 Review
July 1-Sept. 30



Who Are Board-Certified Clinical Specialists?

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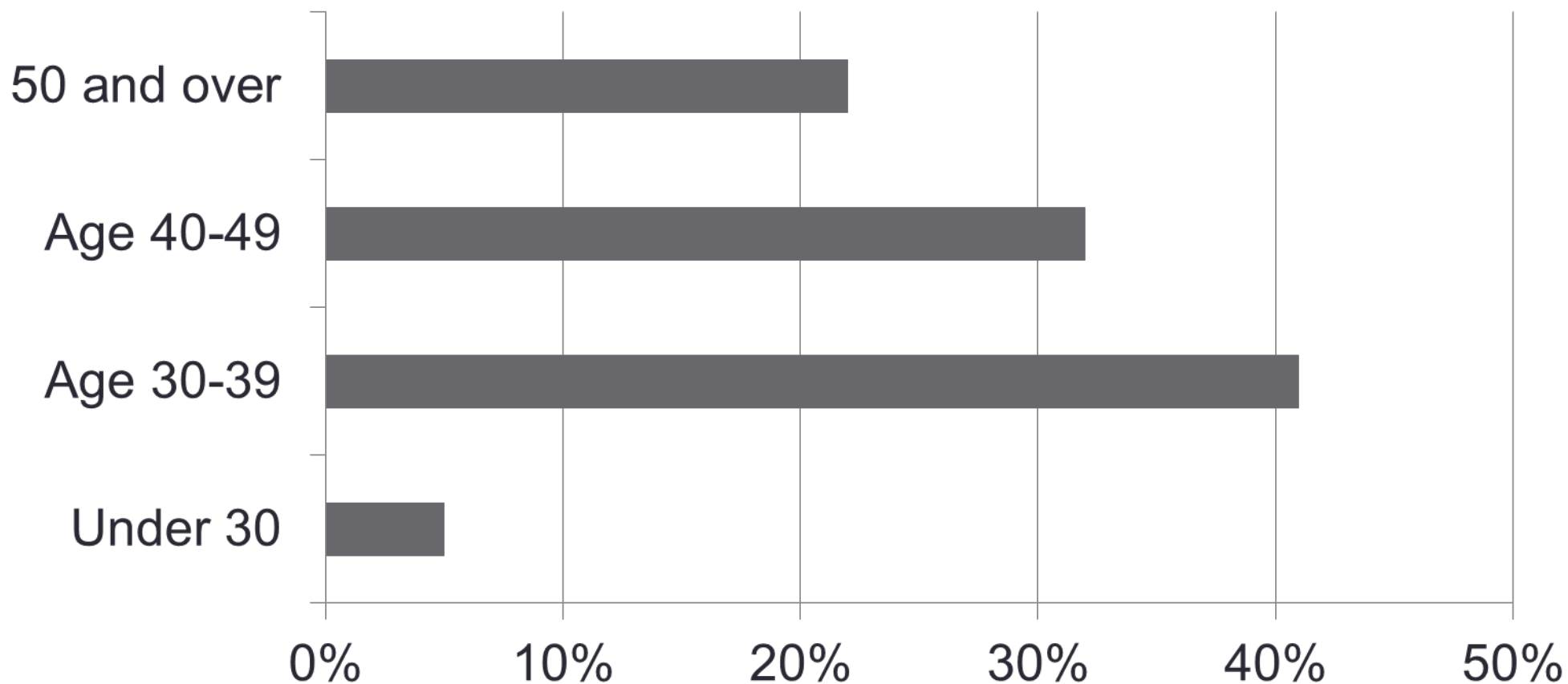
Number of Newly Certified Specialists



Total Numbers of Certified Specialists by Specialty Area

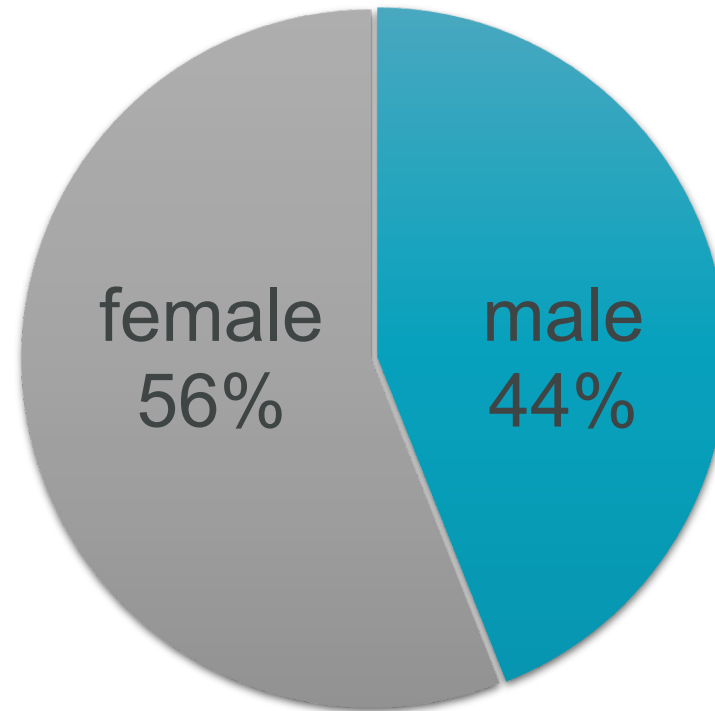
Cardiovascular and Pulmonary (first exam 1985)	326
Clinical Electrophysiologic (first exam 1986)	155
Geriatrics (first exam 1992)	2,760
Neurology (first exam 1987)	3,096
Oncology (first exam 2019)	107
Orthopaedics (first exam 1989)	15,162
Pediatrics (first exam 1986)	1,792
Sports (first exam 1987)	2,230
Women's Health (first exam 2009)	534

Certified Clinical Specialists: Age



Data current as of June 2020

Certified Clinical Specialists: Gender



Data current as of June 2020

Certified Clinical Specialists: Work Settings

1. Private PT offices.
2. Health systems or hospital-based outpatient facility or clinics.
3. Academic institutions.

Certified Clinical Specialists: Positions Held

1. Supervisor/director of PT.
2. Staff or senior PT.
3. Sole owner/partner physical therapy practice.
4. Academic faculty.

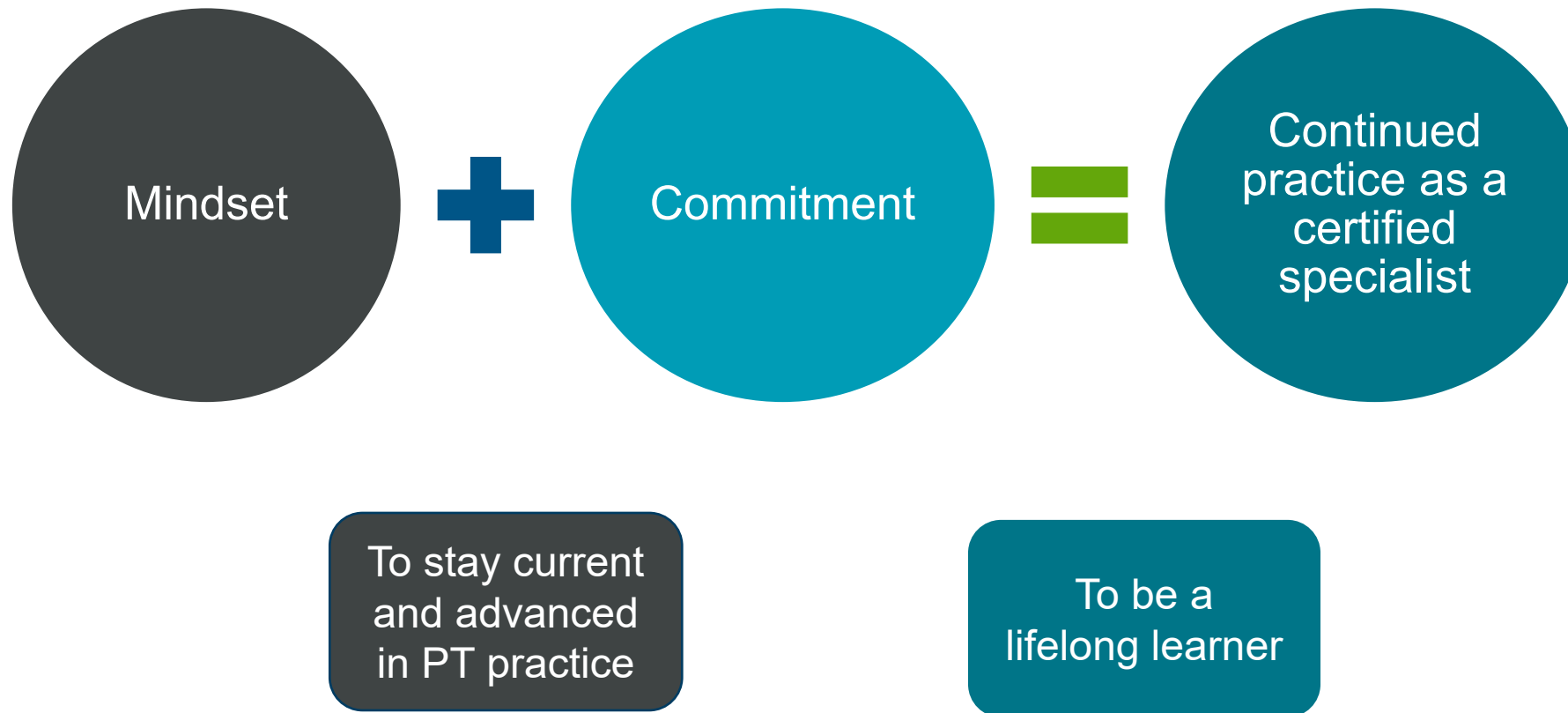
Why Do Physical Therapists Become Board-Certified Clinical Specialists?

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Perspective on ABPTS Specialization

Initial Certification = Starting Point



Top Motivations To Pursue ABPTS Certification

- Professional career goal.
- Personal challenge or achievement.
- Earn a credential that reflects advanced practice to patients, physicians, and payers.
- Proof of expertise in specialty area.

Source: Survey of certified specialists (2018).



Positive Impact of Board Certification

- Sense of personal achievement.
- Self-confidence and professional growth.
- Patient care, including better outcomes.
- Increased credibility with patients and referral sources.
- Recognition in clinical, academic and community settings.

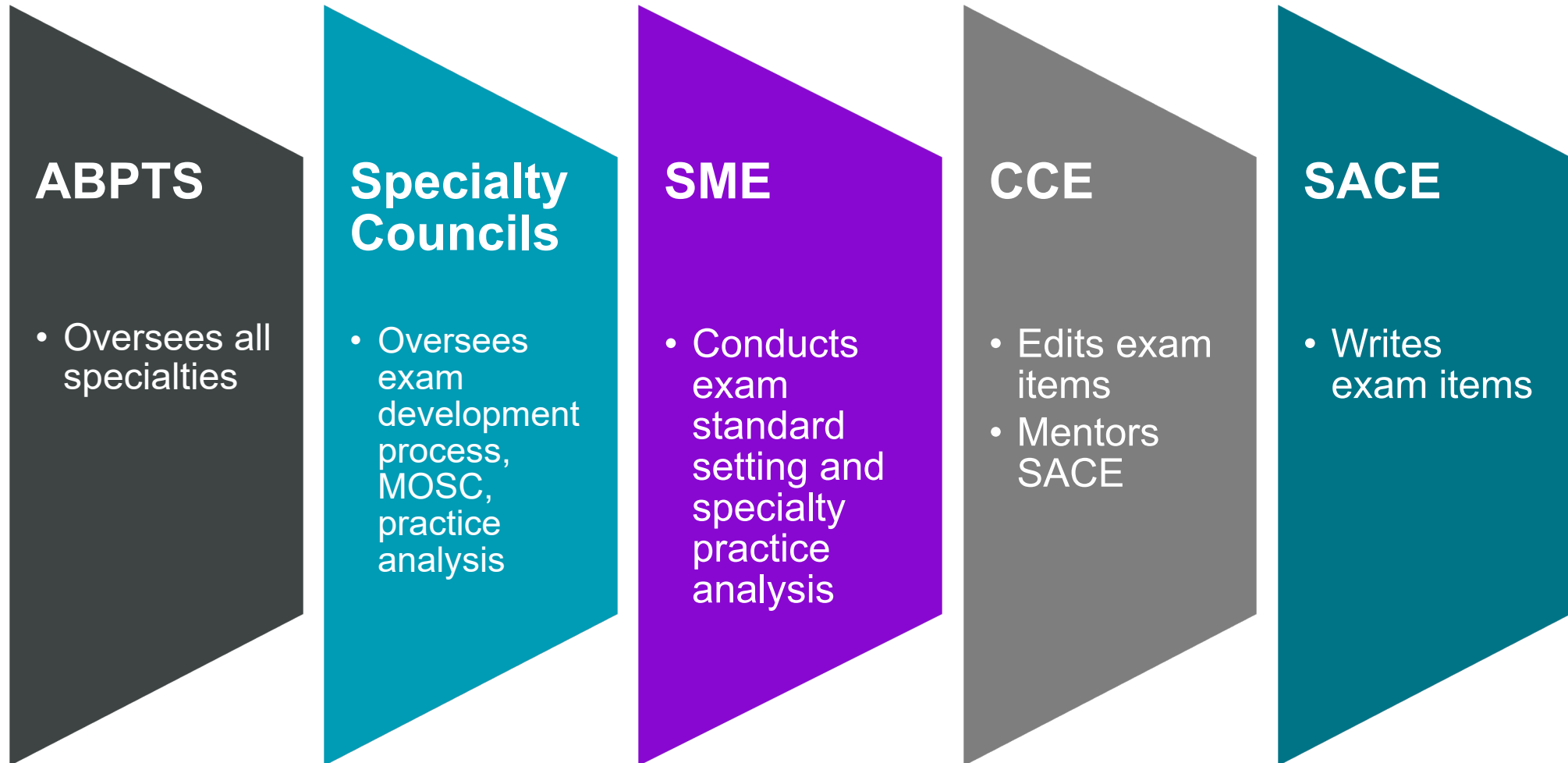
Source: Survey of certified specialists (2018).

How Board-Certification Has Influenced Specialists' Careers

Opened doors for professional growth:

- Consultations.
- Invited presentations.
- New job opportunities.
- Leadership and service.
- Teaching opportunities.
- Research collaboration.
- Networking.

Service Opportunities Related to Specialization



Employer Support of ABPTS Certification

- 53% pay at least some of the costs associated with obtaining clinical specialization.
- 43% give priority in hiring to job applicants who are board certified.
- Employers value the expertise of specialists:
 - High patient care standards.
 - Mentors for others.
 - Team leadership.

Value of ABPTS Certification to Certified Specialists

- 79% report that certification is an indicator of **clinical competence.**
- 90% report that certification is an indicator of **depth and breadth of knowledge in an area of specialty practice.**
- High rate (65%) of specialists choose to recertify.

Source: Survey of certified specialists (2018).

For more information contact:

APTA

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Questions

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