

Tufts University School of Medicine, ATI Physical Therapy launch first-of-its-kind collaboration to make physical therapy education and career advancement more accessible and affordable

New collaboration responds to growing demand for highly trained physical therapists

CHICAGO, Feb. 3, 2025 /PRNewswire/ -- With demand for physical therapy services projected to increase 27 percent by 2030, [Tufts University School of Medicine](#) (TUSM) and [ATI Physical Therapy](#) (ATI), a leading provider of physical therapy services across the United States, are launching a joint initiative aimed at expanding the physical therapist workforce and making the [Doctor of Physical Therapy \(DPT\) Programs](#) at TUSM more accessible.

As part of the first-of-its-kind collaboration, TUSM and ATI will contribute scholarships each semester for up to 45 ATI employees in TUSM's DPT programs each academic year. The accelerated programs, which combine rigorous online coursework with in-person clinical sessions in Boston, Phoenix, and Seattle, are known for their nationally recognized hybrid curriculum that focuses on both clinical skills and community service and feature faculty who are experts in their fields.

"This alliance reflects our commitment to expanding access to health care education," said [Helen Boucher](#), MD, dean at Tufts University School of Medicine and chief academic officer for Tufts Medicine. "By combining our training programs with ATI's clinical experience, we're creating new opportunities for aspiring physical therapists who will be valuable partners for patients and health care practitioners."

ATI will further sponsor up to 20 employees to attend TUSM-DPT's 12-week, online [Accelerated Development of Excellence in Physical Therapy \(ADEPT\) program](#), which offers students personalized support to get the most out of their degree. All TUSM-DPT students will also have increased access to clinical rotations at ATI's network of more than 850 outpatient clinics within the United States.

"This collaboration is a transformative step in supporting the profession and our ATI team members who aspire to become physical therapists," said Sharon Vitti, chief executive officer of ATI Physical Therapy. "By expanding access to education, we're fostering a reliable and sustainable pipeline of skilled, homegrown talent for years to come."

"We want to create clear pathways from early career interest through residencies, fellowships, and specialization in physical therapy," said [Eric Hegedus](#), DPT, PhD, professor and chair of the Department of Rehabilitation Sciences at Tufts University School of Medicine. "By reducing financial barriers and providing early preparation through ADEPT, we're working to ensure that motivated students can access the education they need to meet the growing demand for care."

The initiative is the first of its kind in the physical therapy profession and for TUSM-DPT—bringing together academic and industry expertise with the goal of making physical therapy education more financially accessible to students from diverse backgrounds. This support is considered mission critical for the long-term success of the field as not enough first-generation college students and students from lower-income households pursue a doctorate in physical therapy to meet demand among underserved populations, according to Hegedus.

TUSM and ATI are also collaborating to advance residency and fellowship training through admission pathways from TUSM-DPT to ATI's multi-site sports and orthopedic residencies and co-developing a primary care physical therapy fellowship. These efforts will create additional opportunities for professional advancement in the field and prepare practitioners for the specialized skills as leaders in musculoskeletal care.

"This joint initiative is distinguished by Tufts University's exceptional quality of instruction, robust program offerings, and innovative program formats," said Chuck Thigpen, PhD, senior vice president for clinical excellence at ATI Physical Therapy. "This multi-faceted collaboration will also open joint research initiatives and opportunities for ATI clinicians to contribute to Tufts' programs and signifies the commitment to bridge the gap between academic excellence and high quality clinical practice."

About Tufts University School of Medicine

Tufts University School of Medicine is a premier medical school, revolutionizing health education for a diverse body of students and advancing medical knowledge in a dynamic and collaborative environment, including with a comprehensive network of affiliated teaching hospitals and health care facilities. The school prepares students to become skilled, passionate health care providers and researchers that make a difference in every type of community, with graduates continuing on to top-tier residencies or taking leadership roles at prestigious organizations around the country.

About ATI Physical Therapy, Inc.

At ATI Physical Therapy, we are committed to making every life an active life. We provide convenient access to high-quality care to prevent and treat musculoskeletal (MSK) pain. Our 850+ locations in 24 states and virtual practice operate under one of the largest single-branded platforms built to support standardized clinical guidelines and operating processes. With outcomes

from more than 3 million unique patient cases, ATI strives to utilize quality standards designed to deliver proven, predictable, and impactful patient outcomes. From preventative services in the workplace and athletic training support to outpatient clinical services and online physical therapy via our online platform, CONNECT™, a complete list of our service offerings can be found at ATIppt.com. ATI is based in Downers Grove, Illinois.

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