



GREATER NEW ENGLAND STUDENT SURVEY



Dear New Graduates, PT Students, and PT Program Partners,

I want to start by saying thank you for being here and for being such an important part of this journey. As a physical therapist and the head of University Relations, I'm deeply committed to creating a supportive, thriving environment for our PT students and new graduates.

This past Fall, we launched the very first Greater New England Student Survey, and I couldn't be more excited about what it represents. Our goal was simple: to gather valuable insights that help us truly understand the experiences and needs of our PT students and new grads. By doing so, we hope to influence the future of physical therapy education, practice, and career growth in a way that makes a real difference.

Since this was our first survey, we are eager to hear how it landed with you. Did it provide the insights you needed? Was there anything we missed? Your feedback is essential in helping us improve this survey for the future, so please don't hesitate to share your thoughts with us.

This survey is more than just data—it's a chance for all of us to come together and advocate for the future of our profession. I encourage you to explore the results and analysis, and I'm excited to continue working with all of you as we collaborate and continue to strengthen and enhance our profession.

Thank you again for your participation and for being a part of this important initiative.

Sincerely,

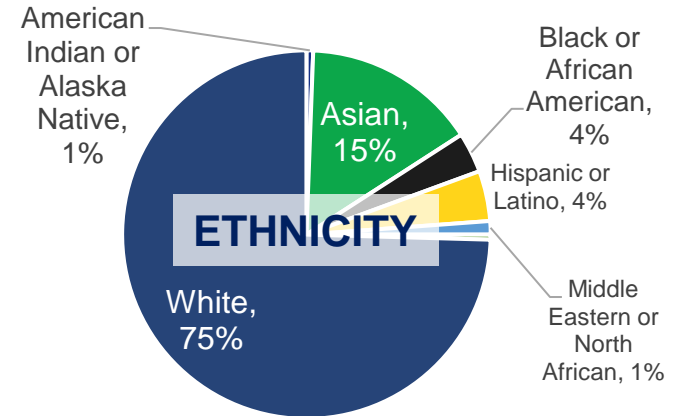
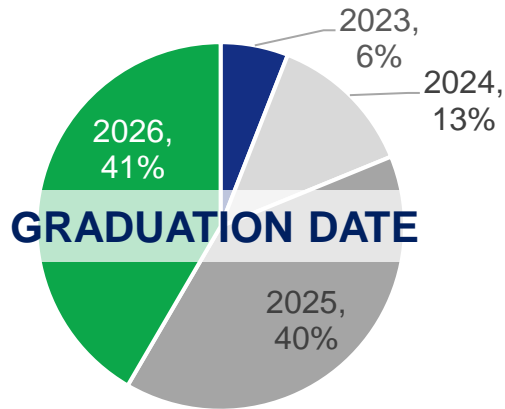
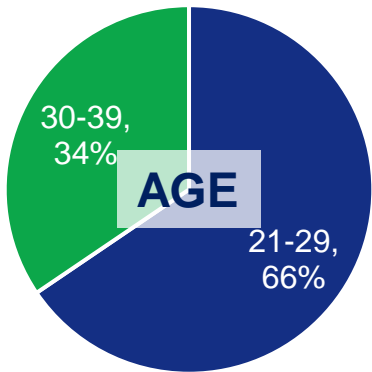
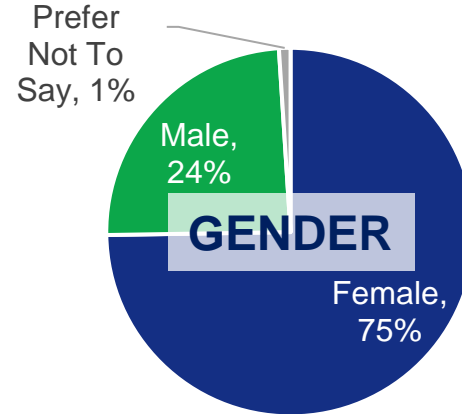
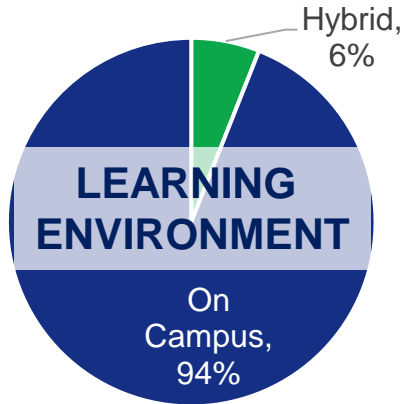
Erica Feitler

Director University Relations

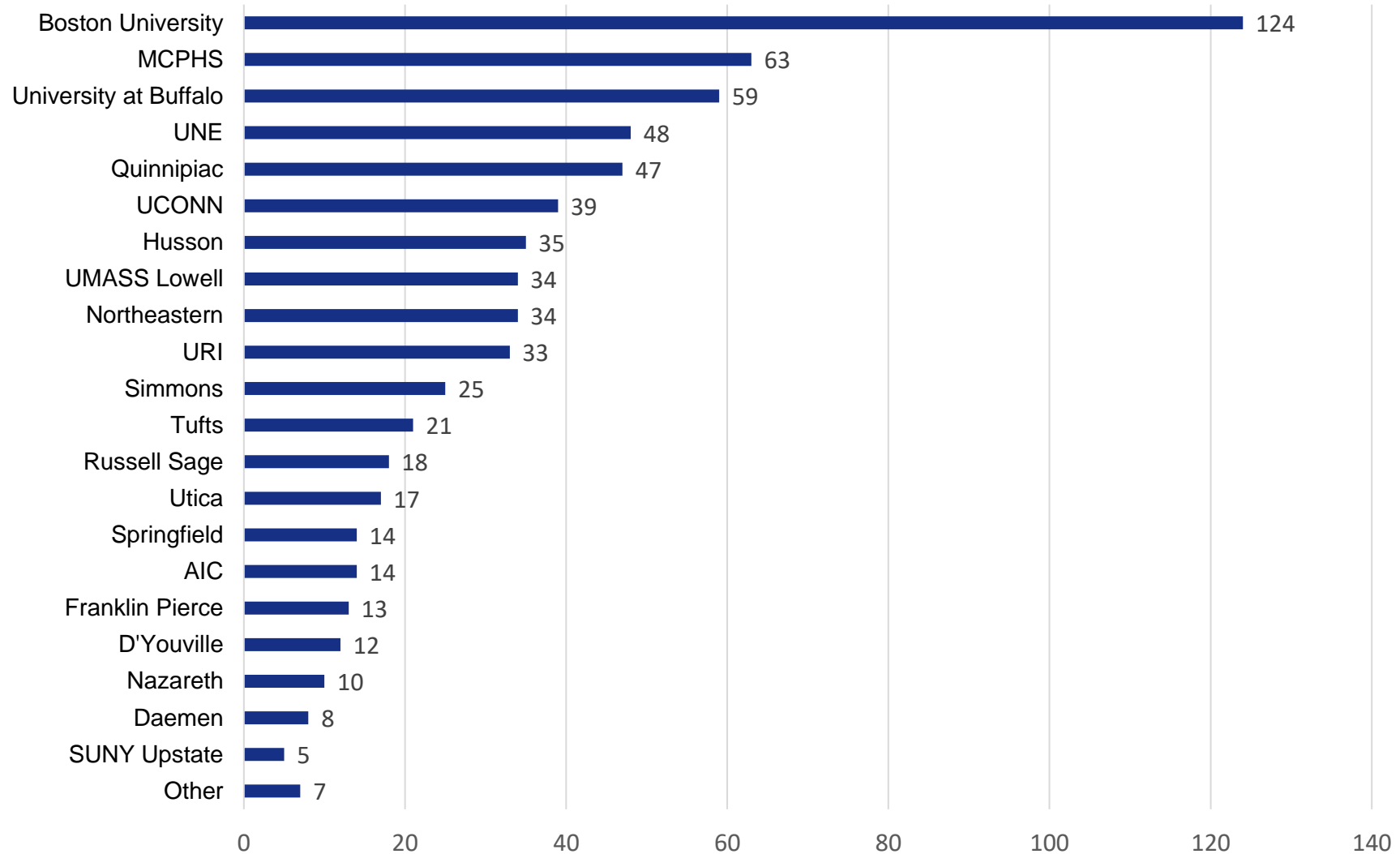
MVPT Physical Therapy

WHO WE SURVEYED

 **680**
TOTAL STUDENTS



PT Programs that participated in this study:



The 2024 Greater New England Student Survey provided important insights into PT students within the region. The survey helped to identify that students in the region are passionate about their profession and generally ready to embark on their future career, are weighing diverse value drivers (growth, compensation, mentorship, etc.) as they evaluate their first job, and are generally stressed about student loan debt and cost of living.

Key Findings: Results

Clinical Experience: Students Value Their Experiences But Want More Hands-On Learning

- 84% of students would recommend their outpatient clinical experience.
- Many students desire more hands-on practice, structured learning, and better time management.
- Mentorship is the most important factor in clinical experiences.

Most students feel confident in handling documentation and patient care but are less confident about board exams.

- 57% of 2023-2024 graduates feel well-prepared for the NPTE board exam.
- In contrast, only 23% of 2025-2026 graduates feel ready.

Job Selection: Mentorship and Compensation Drive Career Decisions

- Base salary, flexible work schedules, and loan repayment programs are the most valued job benefits.
- Mentorship (27% rank 1), work setting, and compensation are the top factors influencing job selection.
- Debt is a primary consideration for 26% of students when choosing a job.
- Cost of living plays a significant role in both work setting and postgraduate residence.

Debt & Anxiety: High Student Debt Causes Significant Financial and Emotional Strain

- 76% of students with high debt (>\$150K) report extreme stress.
- Nearly 70% of high-debt students feel their PT education does not justify tuition costs.



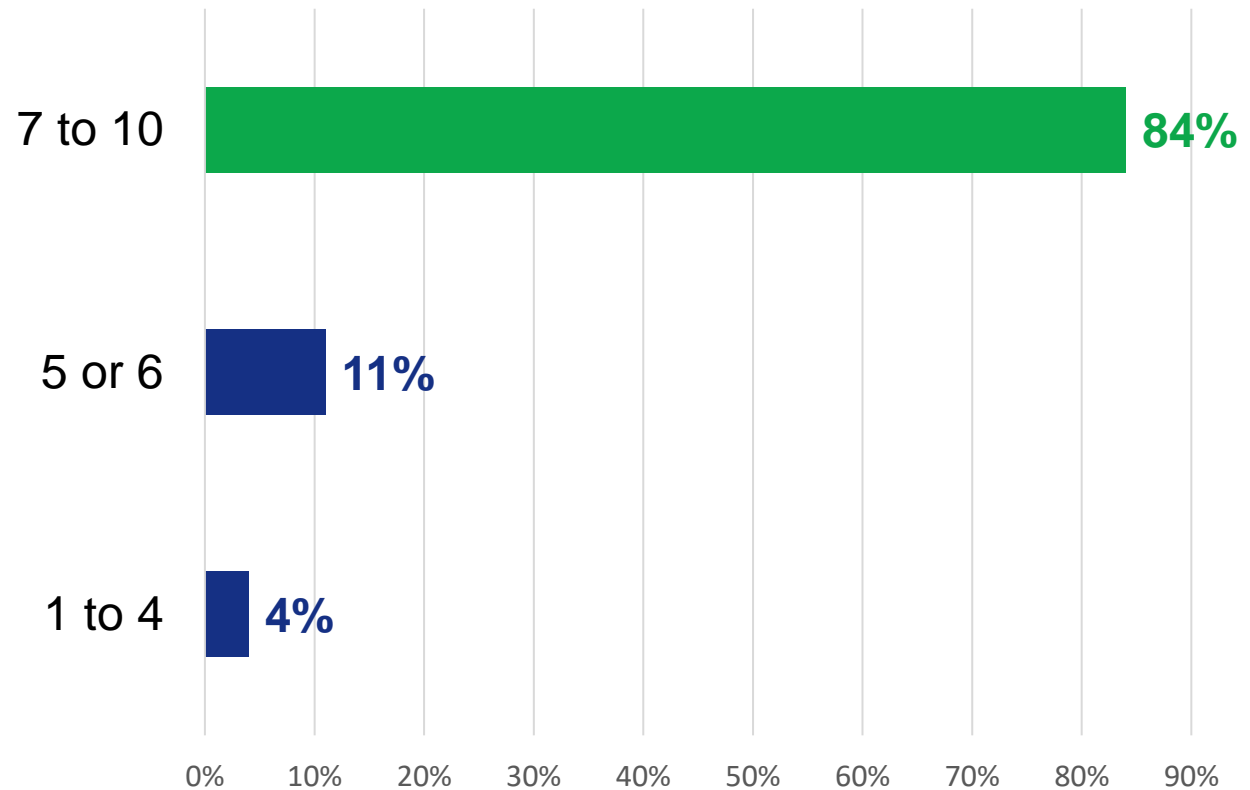
CLINICAL EXPERIENCE

Students are highly satisfied with their outpatient clinical experiences

84%

of students **would recommend** their outpatient clinical experience

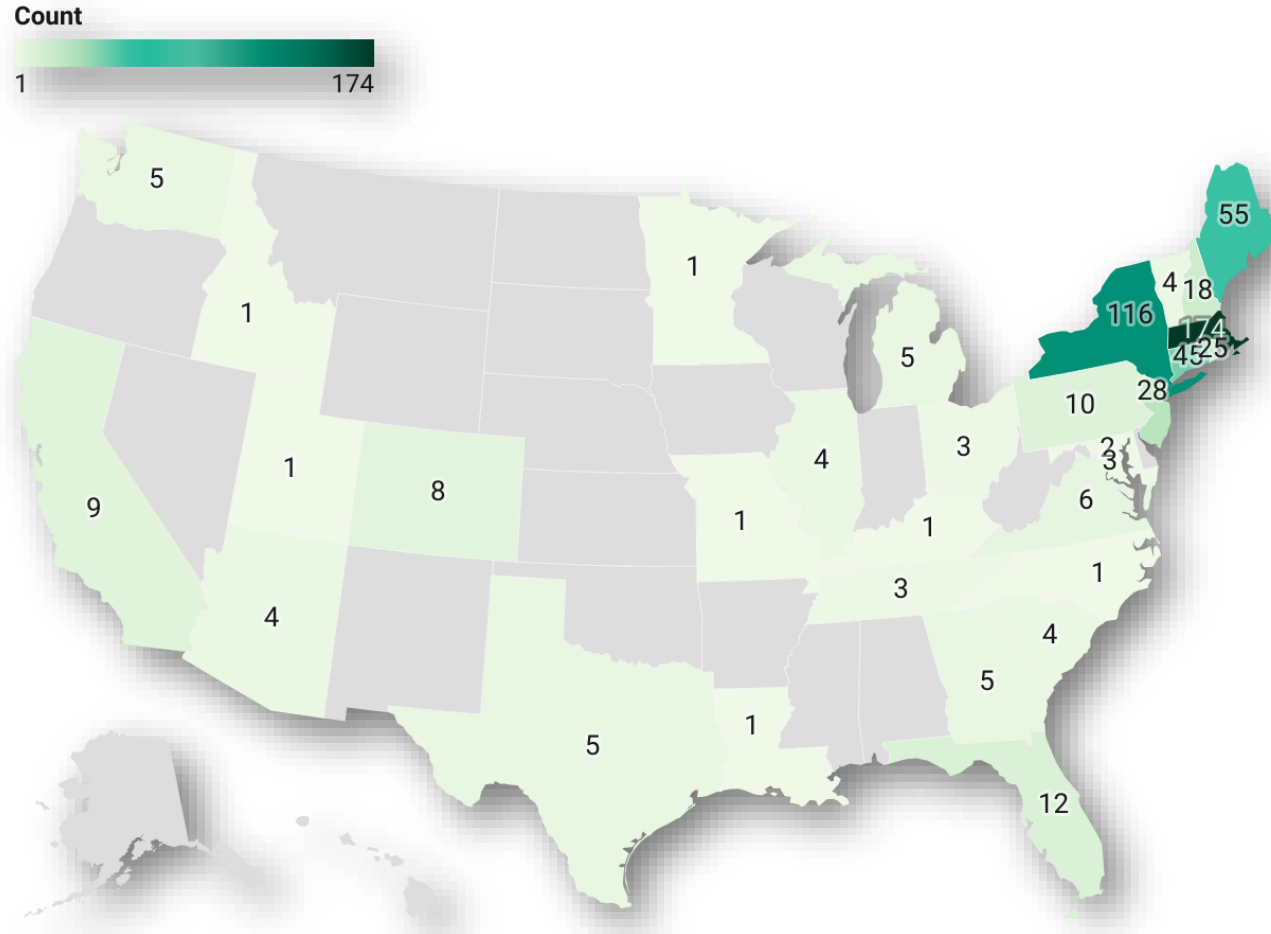
How likely are you to recommend your outpatient clinical experience to another student or colleague on a scale of 0 to 10?



Base n = 470; Total sample n = 680

PT students in greater New England are choosing to complete their outpatient clinical experiences close to school location

What was the location of your outpatient clinical experience(s)?



TOP 10 STATES

State	No. of students
MA	174
NY	116
ME	55
CT	45
NJ	28
RI	25
NH	18
FL	12
PA	10
CA	9

**Note that if students did their clinical in more than one state, both states were counted*

** 5 responses were omitted as they were unclear*

Key areas for improvement in outpatient clinical experience

<u>Theme</u>	<u>Example Responses</u>
<p>More Hands-on Experience (91 responses) <i>Many respondents wanted more practical exposure, including performing procedures, practicing skills, and shadowing experienced professionals.</i></p>	<p><i>“More practice with hands-on skills”</i></p> <p><i>“My clinic could have better supported my confidence within everyday practices”</i></p>
<p>More Learning Opportunities (75 responses) <i>Requests for more structured learning experiences, educational resources, and training to enhance their knowledge.</i></p>	<p><i>“More direct education as opposed to just working for them”</i></p> <p><i>“Have more structured educational opportunities”</i></p>
<p>Better Time Management (68 responses) <i>Issues with scheduling, limited time for learning, and feeling overloaded with responsibilities.</i></p>	<p><i>“I wish I had more one-on-one time with my CI”</i></p> <p><i>“Blocked off teaching times”</i></p>
<p>Better Patient Exposure (66 responses) <i>A desire for a more diverse caseload and opportunities to interact with a variety of patients.</i></p>	<p><i>“More variety in the caseload”</i></p> <p><i>“I think my CI was great; I just did not get to see the caseload I wanted to”</i></p>

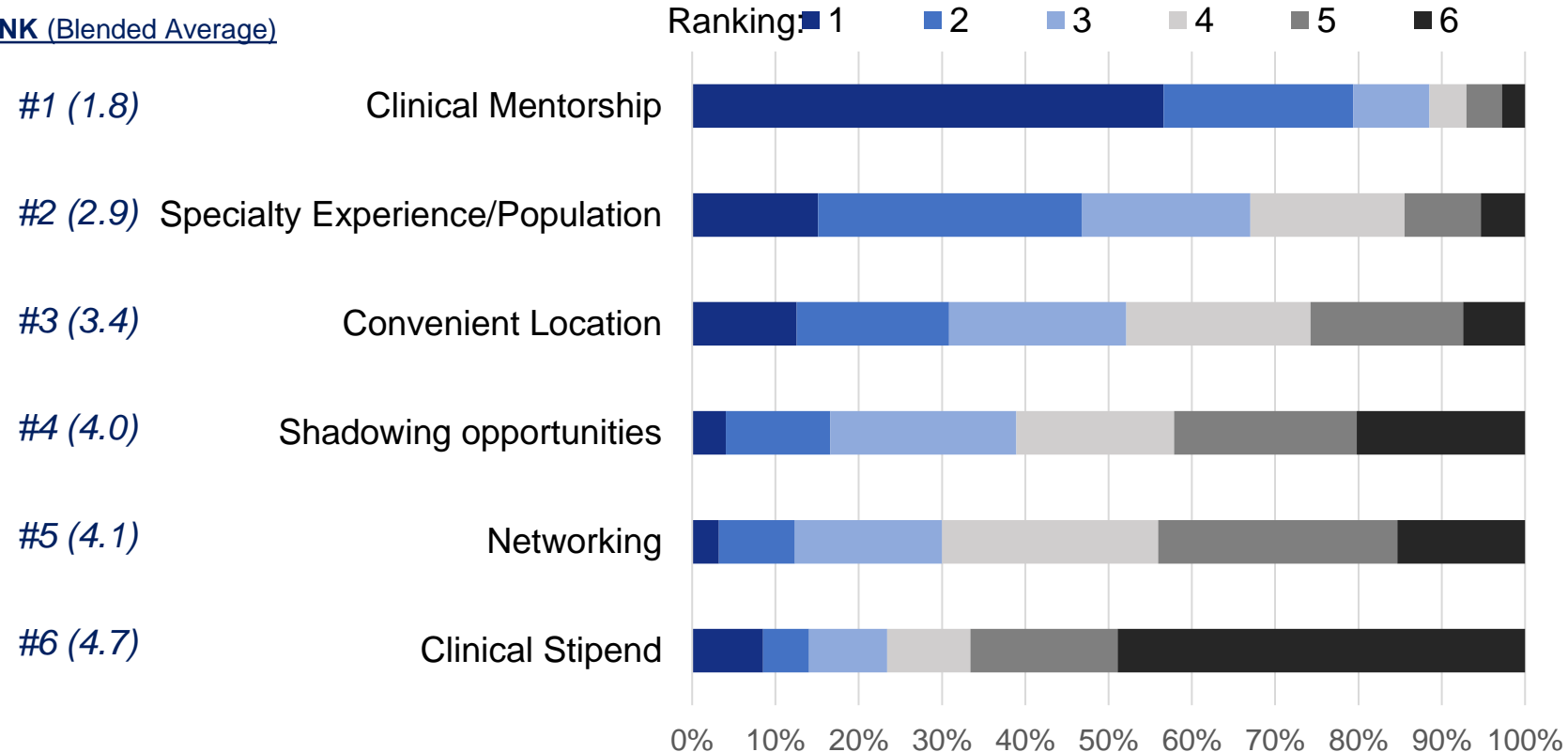
Key areas for improvement for PT programs to prepare students for outpatient clinical experience

<u>Theme</u>	<u>Example Responses</u>
<p>More Practice + Exposure (70 responses) <i>These responses suggest that students wanted more practice with evaluations, exposure to different treatment approaches, and structured hands-on learning opportunities before clinicals.</i></p>	<p><i>“More practice with evals” ; “More evaluation practice”</i></p> <p><i>“Include more ICE (Integrated Clinical Experience) opportunities”</i></p>
<p>More Clinically Relevant Education (55 responses) <i>Students wanted more clinically relevant education before their first clinical, better teaching methods for real world application, and earlier exposure to interventions and documentation</i></p>	<p><i>“Some of the information that would’ve been useful to know was not learned until after our first clinical”</i></p> <p><i>“Less teaching for the test and more teaching for retention and overall understanding”</i></p> <p><i>“My PT program needs to focus more on practical application of content”</i></p> <p><i>“Made our MSK practicals more realistic...have the patient present with multiple different diagnoses instead of a clear-cut single diagnosis”</i></p>

Mentorship drives a valuable clinical experience

What is most important to you on your clinical experiences?
[Rank 1 to 6]

OVERALL RANK (Blended Average)

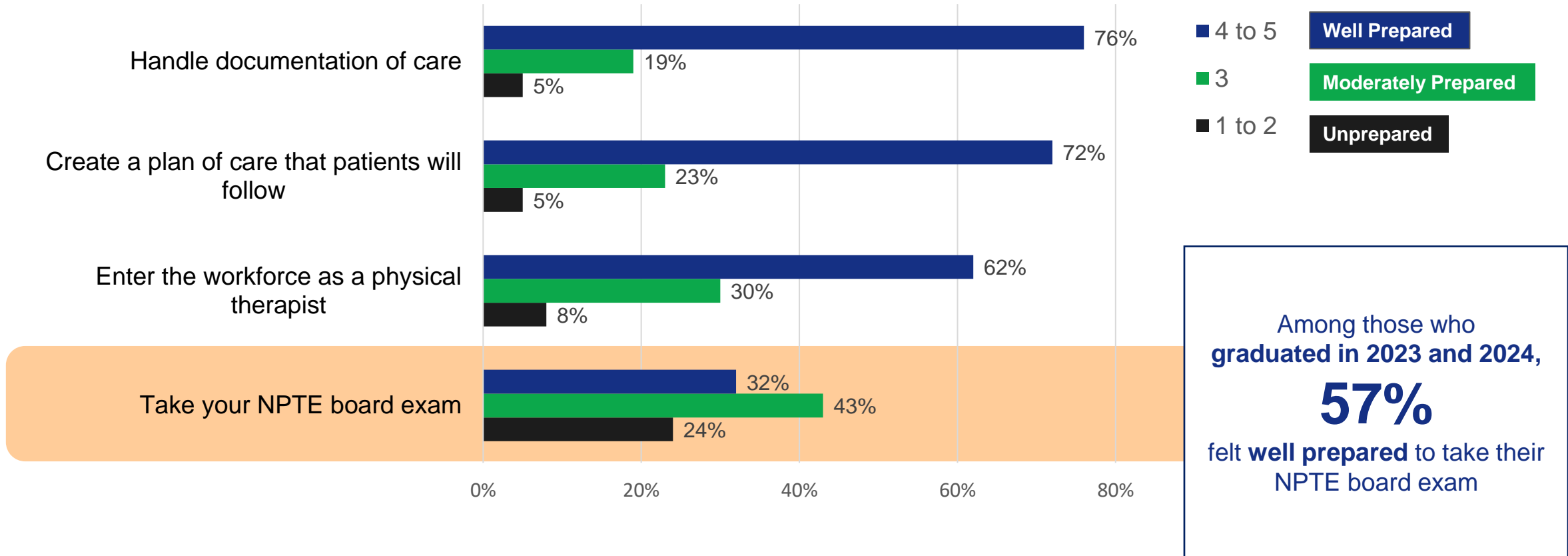




PREPAREDNESS

Board exam readiness lags behind other areas of clinical preparedness

After your clinical experiences, how prepared do you feel to...?
(1 - not prepared, 5 - very prepared)

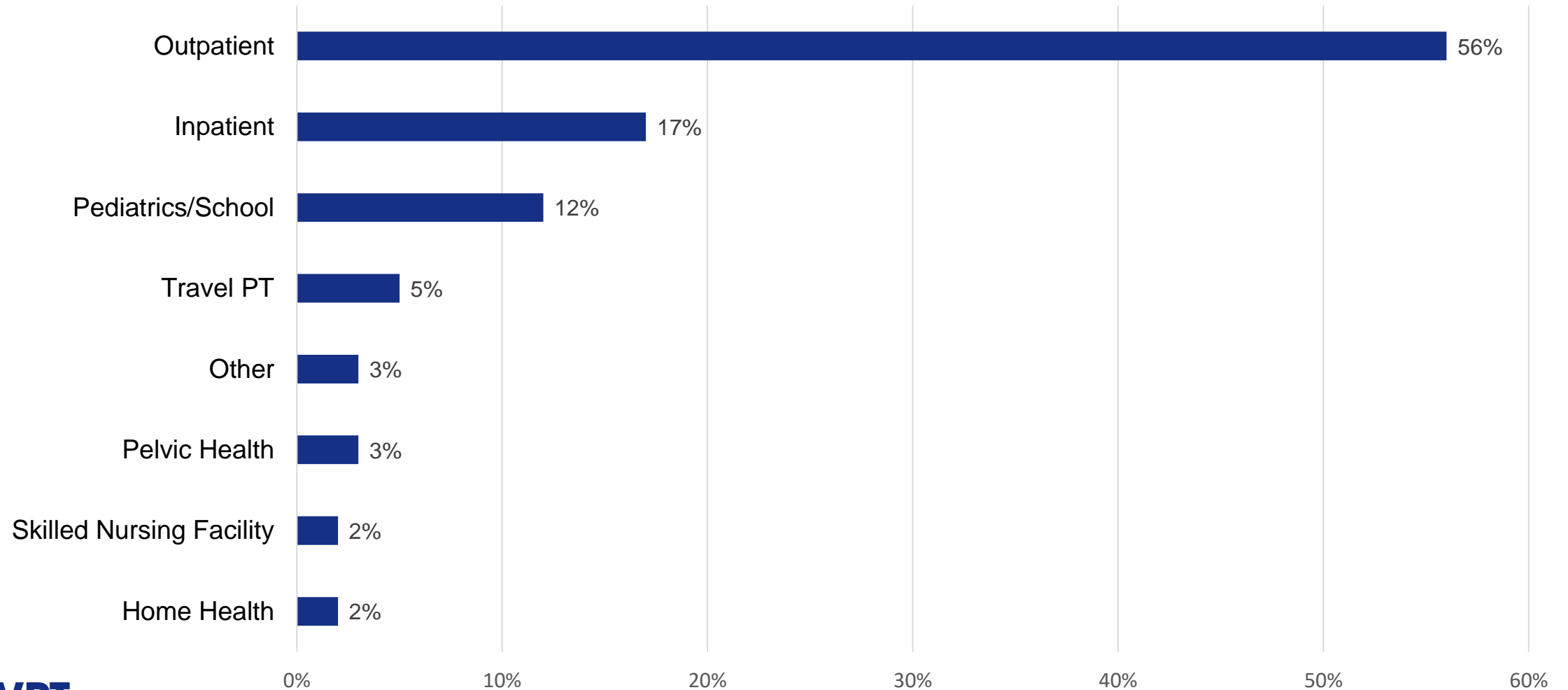


A young woman with dark hair, wearing a light-colored top, is smiling and assisting an elderly woman with white hair. The elderly woman is in a low, athletic starting position on a blue mat, wearing a light blue t-shirt and dark pants. The young woman is kneeling behind her, with her hands extended towards the elderly woman's hands. In the background, there is a large blue exercise ball and a white shelving unit with some items on it. The overall scene is set in a bright, clean environment, likely a gym or a fitness studio.

JOB SELECTION

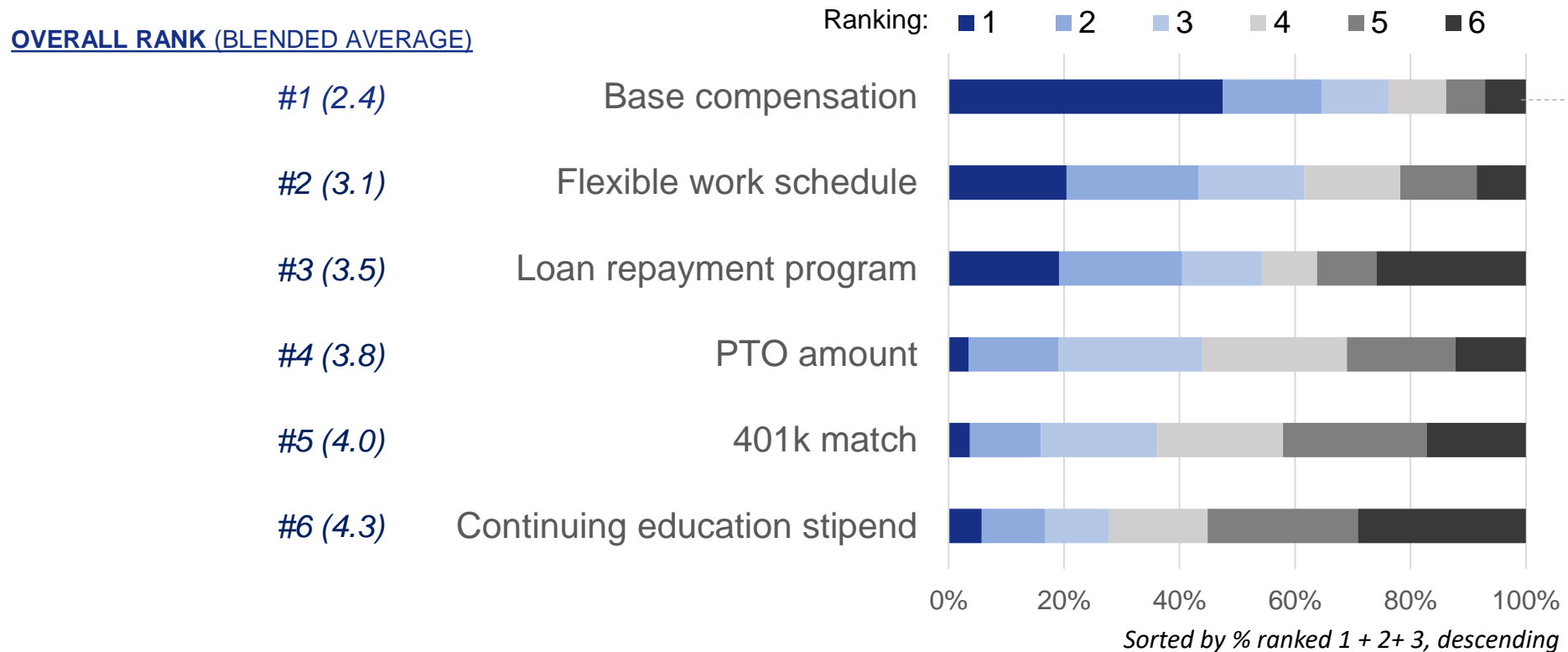
Students gravitate towards outpatient for their first job

What setting do you expect to work post-graduation?



Base compensation becomes more important as students approach graduation

What **benefit offerings** are most important to you when selecting a job?
Rank 1 to 6

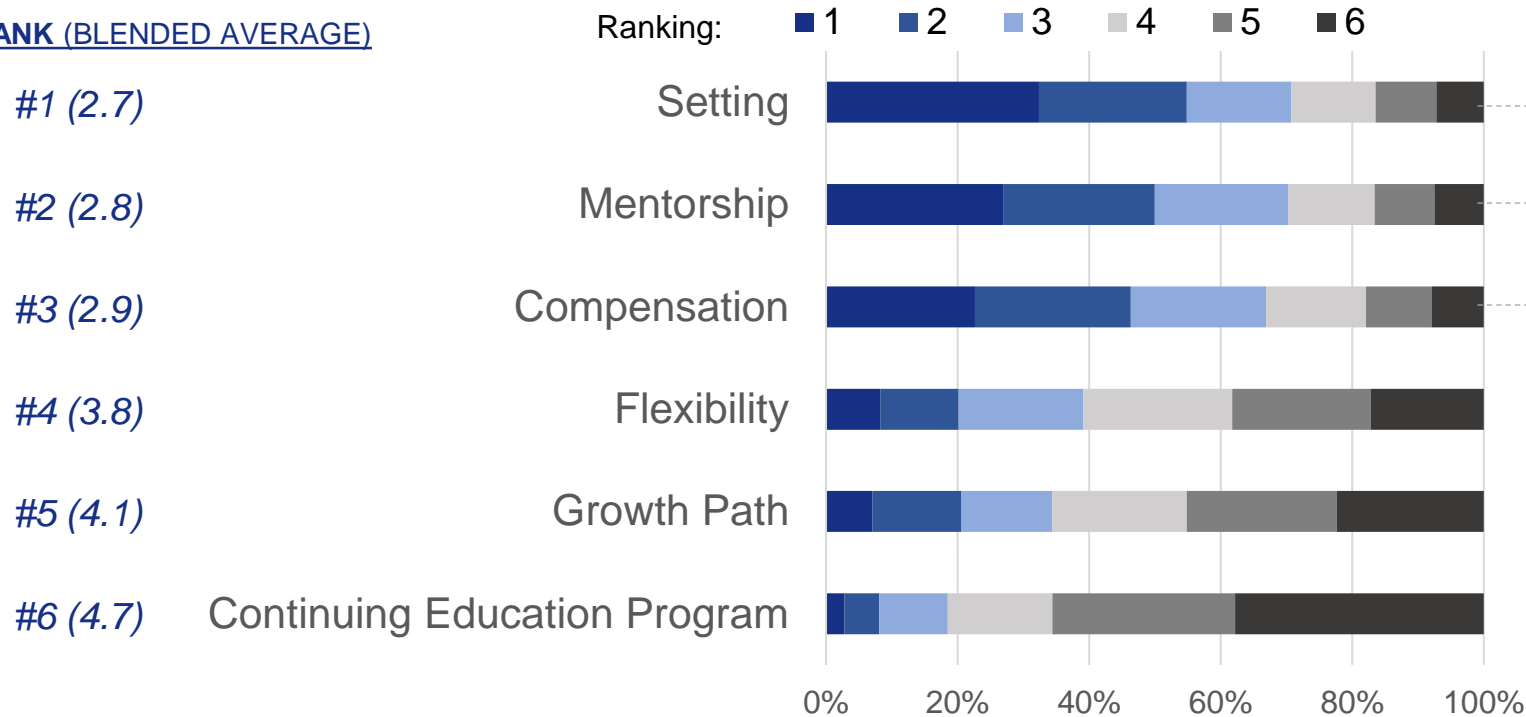


MORE IMPORTANT
Among 2023 & 2024 Graduates
+12%
% ranked 1 + 2 + 3

Mentorship, setting and compensation are top priorities for new grads

What **factors** when you are/were looking for your **first job in the industry?**
Rank 1 to 6

OVERALL RANK (BLENDED AVERAGE)



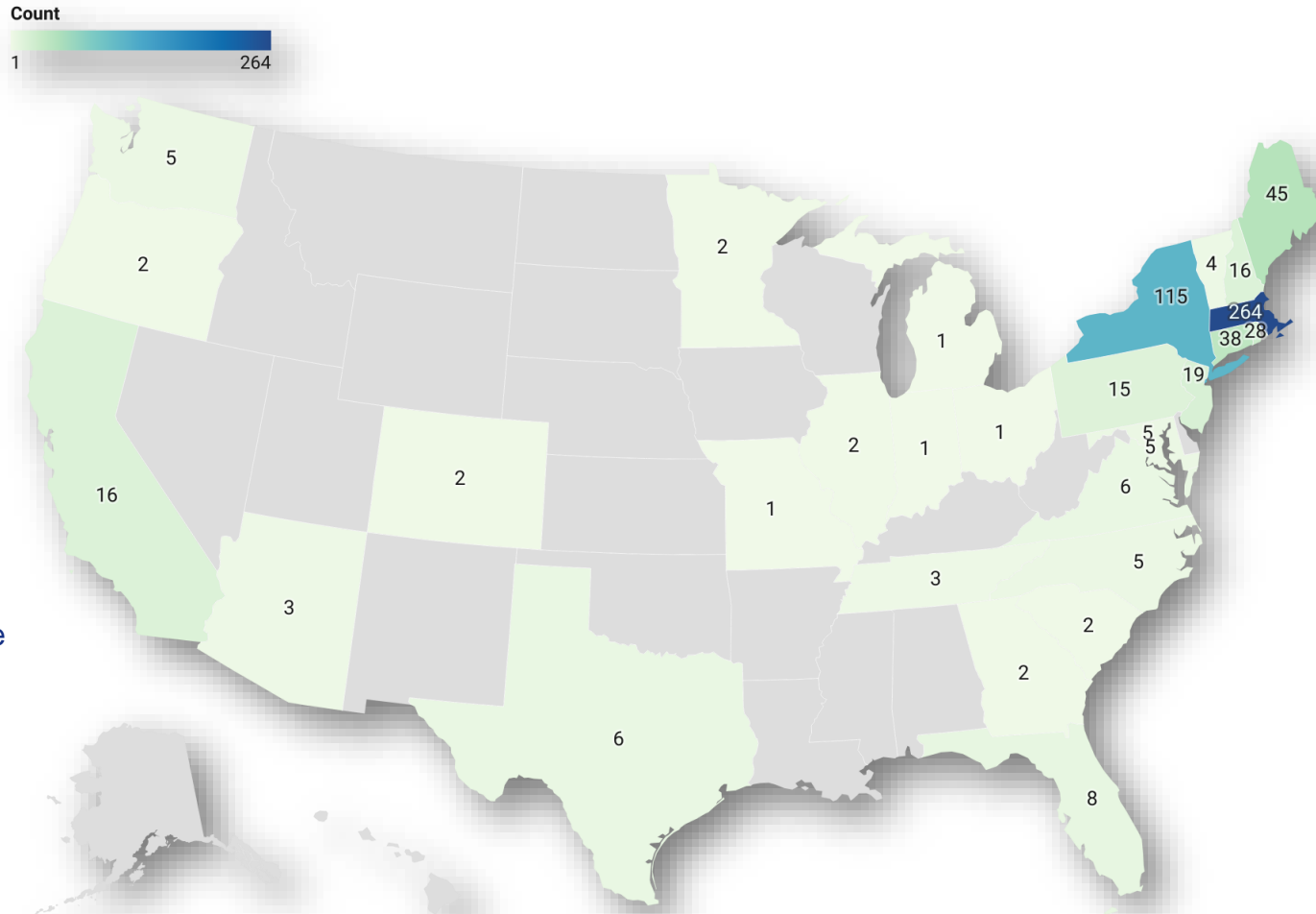
MORE IMPORTANT
Among 2023 & 2024 Graduates

+6%
+4%
+7%

% ranked 1 + 2 + 3

The majority of students who attend(ed) greater New England PT programs are choosing to live in New England and New York

Where do you plan to live after graduation?



57%

Did their clinical experience in the same state they are planning on moving to after graduation

TOP 10 STATES

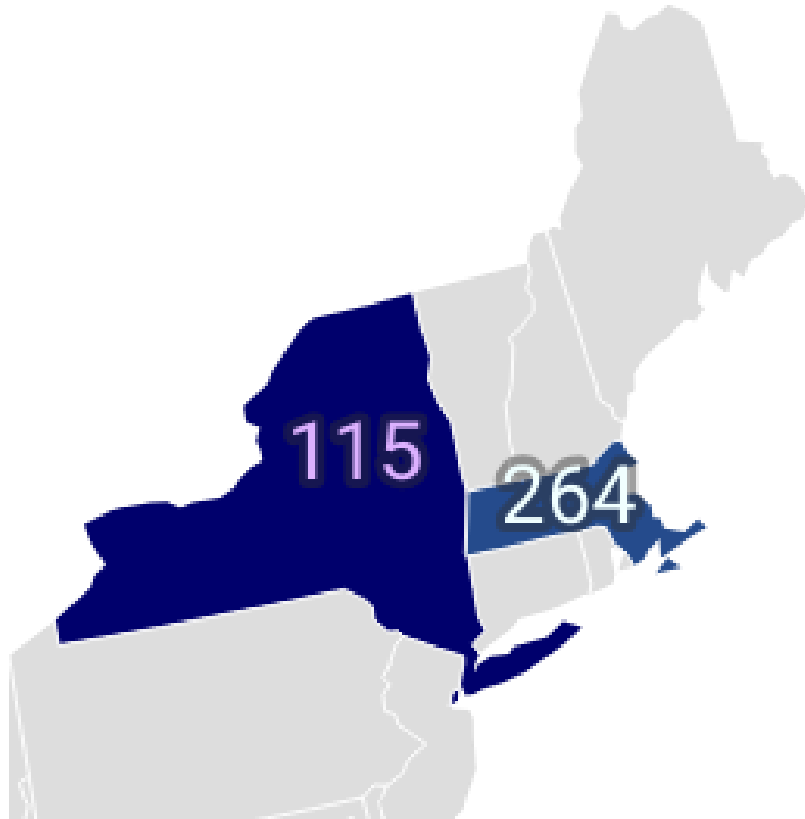
State	No. of students	%
MA	264	39%
NY	115	17%
ME	45	7%
CT	38	6%
RI	28	4%
NJ	19	3%
CA	16	2%
NH	16	2%
PA	15	2%
FL	8	1%

8% Unsure (53 students)

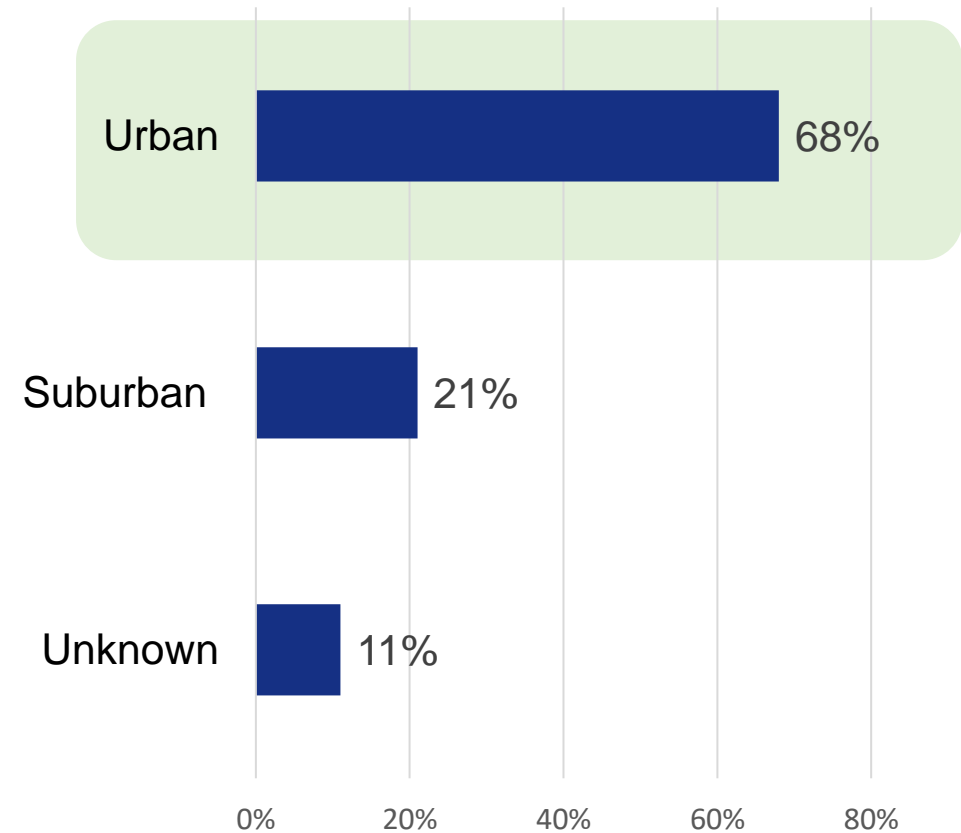
1% Travel (5 students)

Zooming in on the top two states: students choose urban areas, creating a potential future gap in access to care for patients living in suburban areas.

Where do you plan to live after graduation?



New York + Massachusetts
Urban vs. Suburban Breakdown



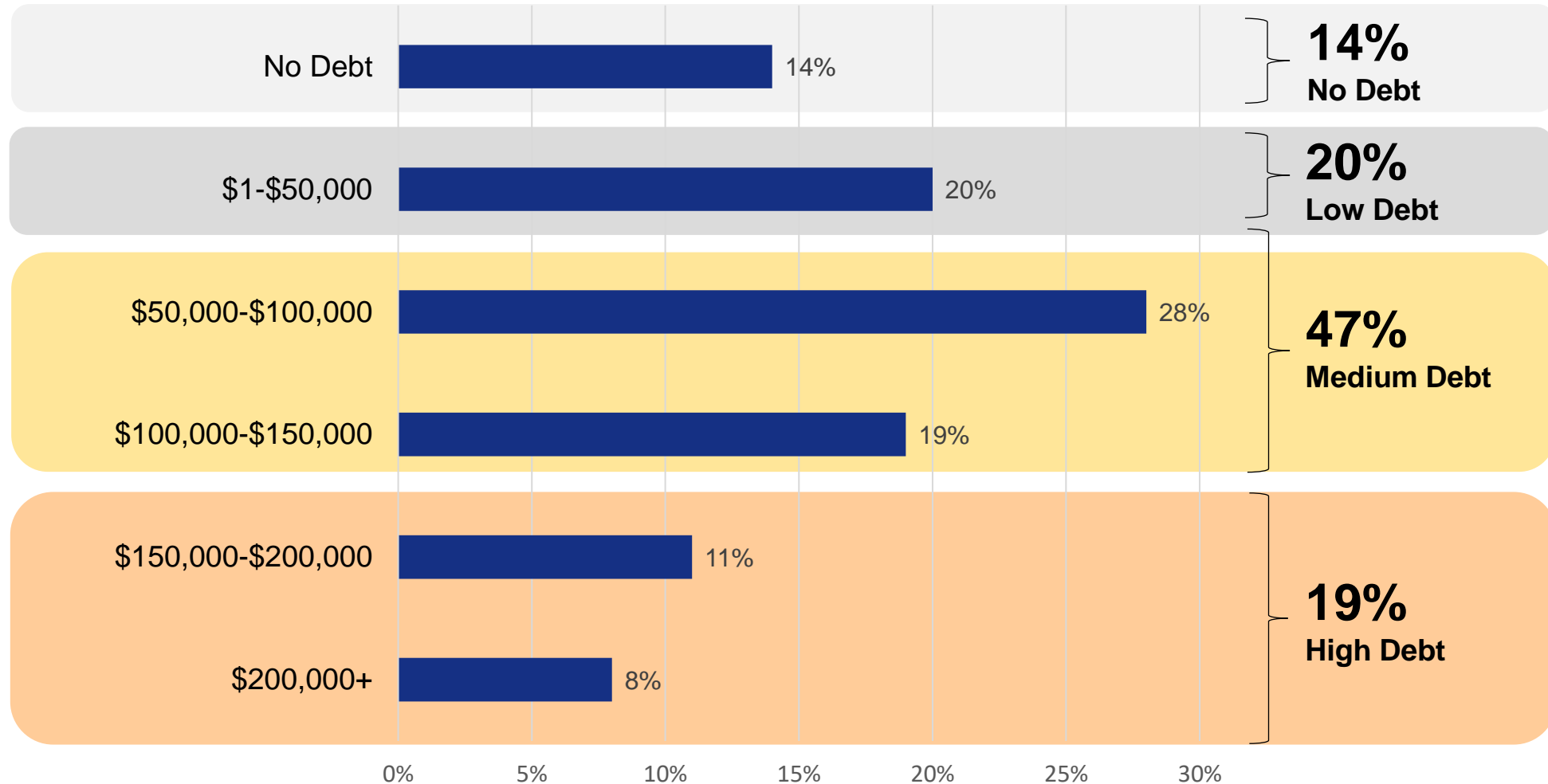
Massachusetts + New York; base n = 379



DEBT & ANXIETY

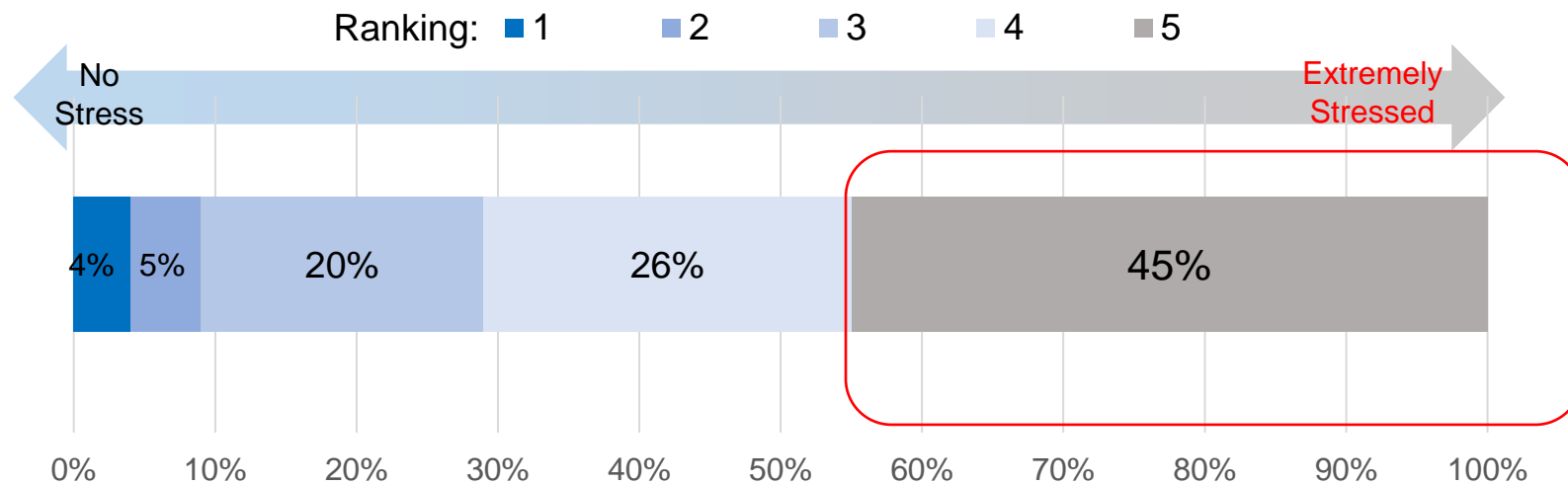
Nearly half of students carry between \$50K - \$150K in debt

How much student debt do you currently have?



Student loan debt is a major source of stress for students

How much stress do you feel related to your student loans?
(1= no stress, 5= extremely stressed)



Vs

76%

feel **extremely stressed** among those with **high debt** (defined as 150k+)

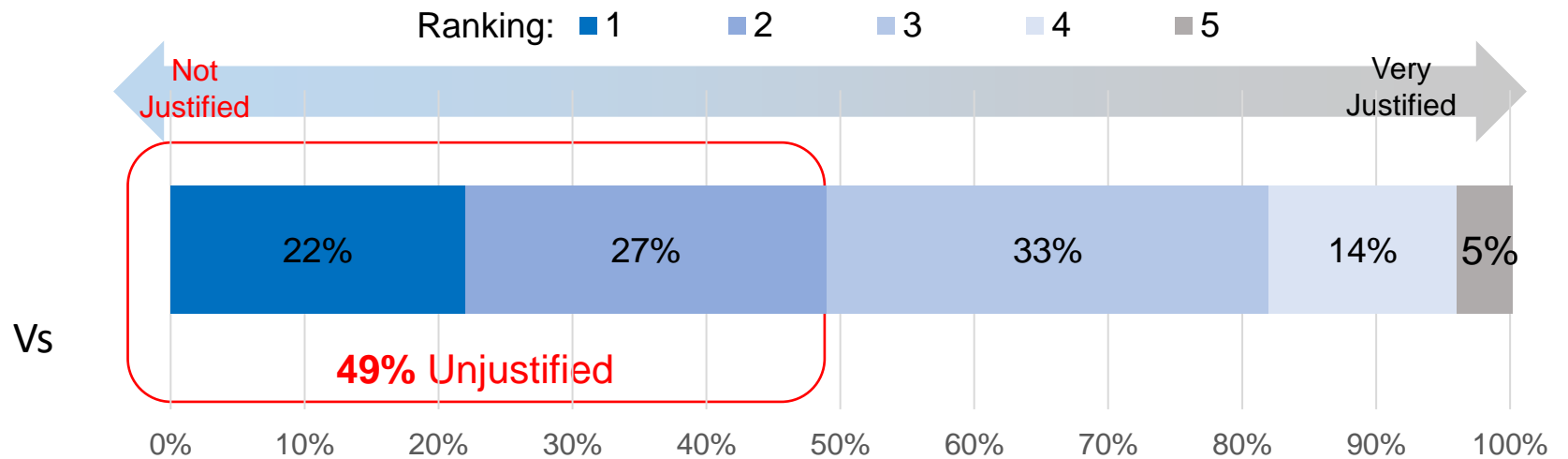
Base n = 127

As debt levels rise, many respondents feel the value may not fully align with the costs

Do you think your physical therapy education justifies the expense of tuition?
(1=not justified, 5= very justified)

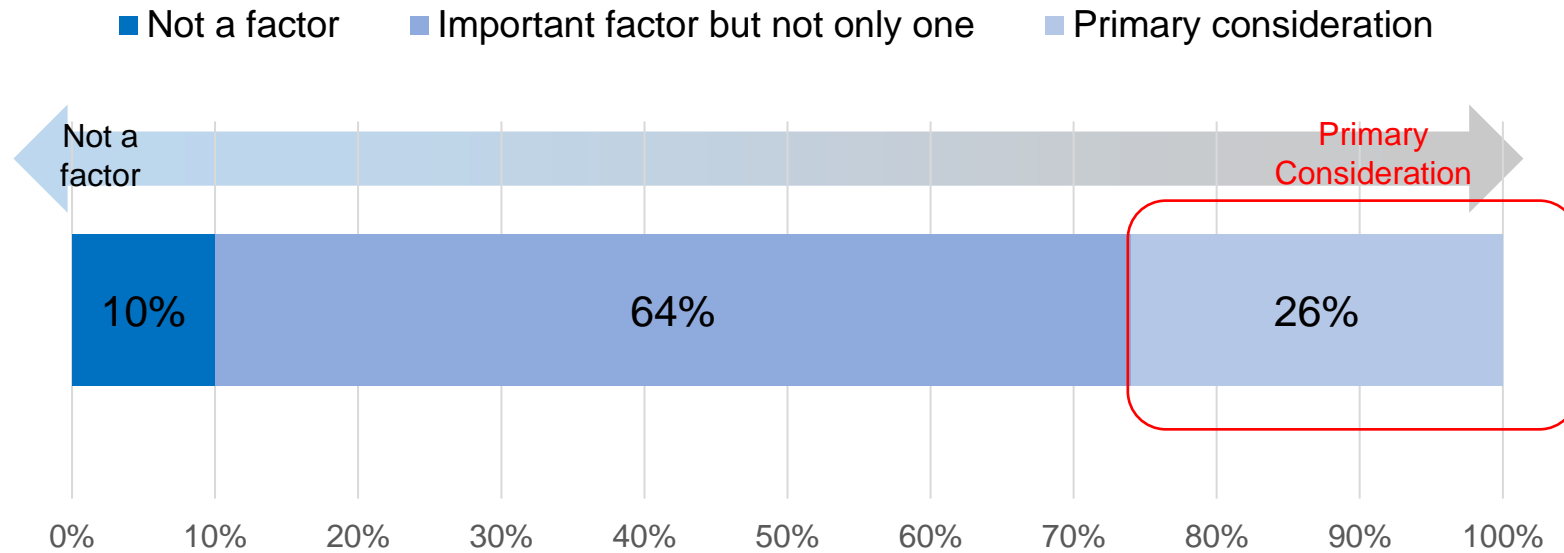
68%
feel it is **Unjustified**
among those with
high debt (defined as
150k+)

Base n = 127



For 1 in 4 students, debt is the primary factor in job choice

How does your student debt affect your job choice?



Vs

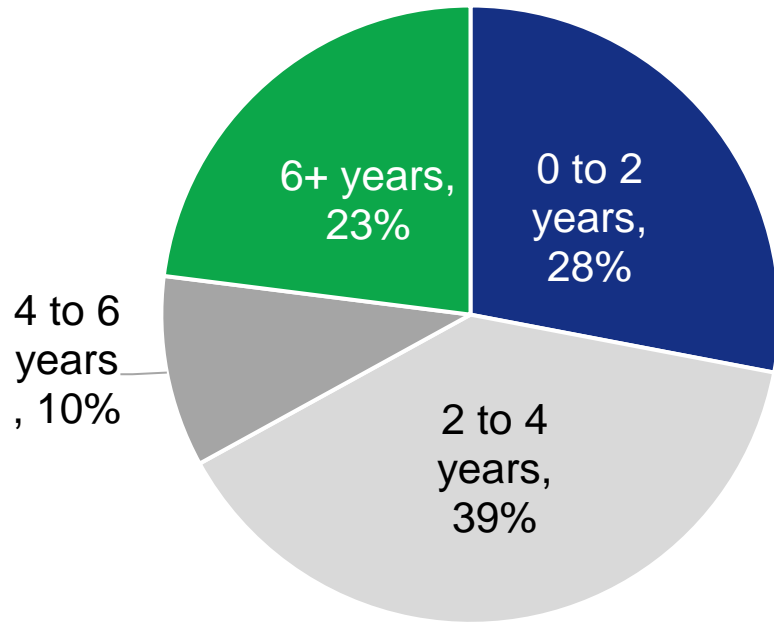
42%

Say it's the **primary consideration** among those with **high debt** (defined as 150k+)

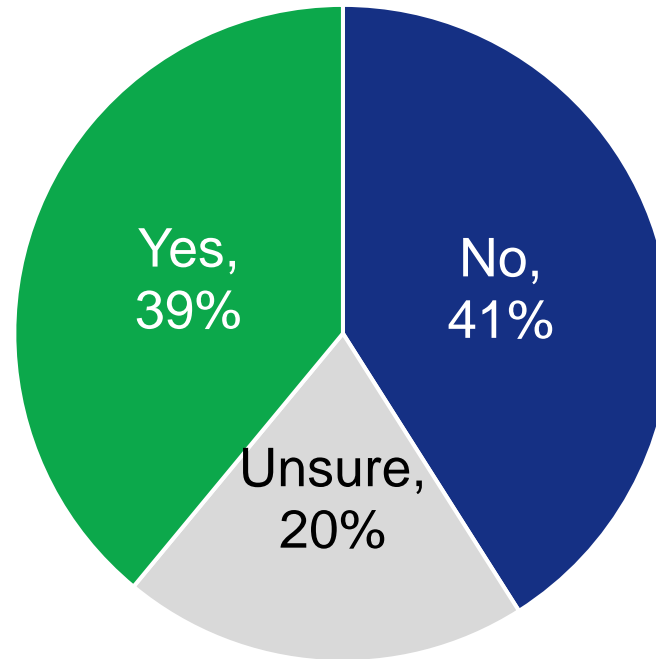
Base n = 127

Despite having high levels of debt, students are still looking to live in urban areas away from home

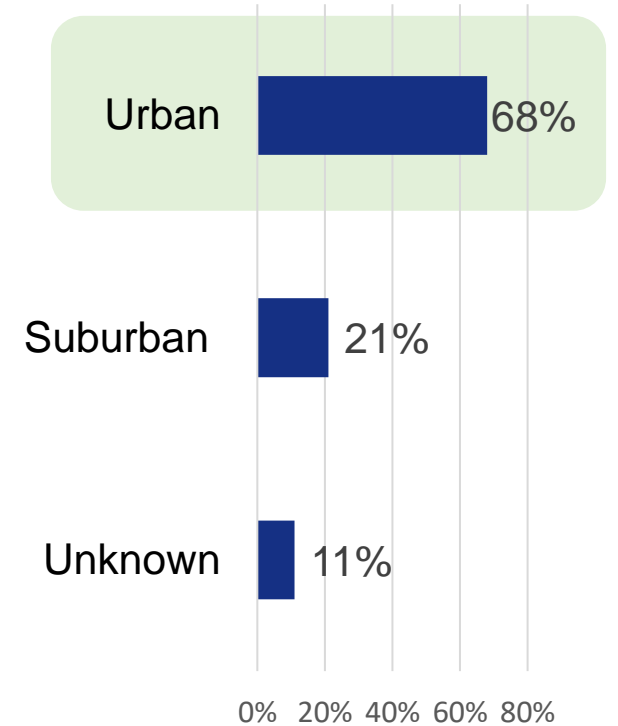
After graduation, how long do you plan to live in the town/city where you are working for your first job?



Do you plan to live at home in your first year after graduation?



New York + Massachusetts
**Urban vs. Suburban
Breakdown**



Thank You for Your Participation!

We would like to extend our heartfelt thanks to all the students, new graduates, and PT program partners who participated in the Greater New England Student Survey. Your valuable feedback is instrumental in shaping the future of our profession.

We look forward to our continued collaboration and support for the next generation of PT professionals! Survey results provided by Bay State PT/MVPT Physical Therapy, the leading provider of outpatient orthopedic physical therapy team in the Northeast. We are committed to improving patient outcomes, access and experience that drive towards improvement in musculoskeletal model of physical therapy.

