



Practitioner Perception of the Value of
License Renewal/Recertification
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HRRI PRACTITIONER PERCEPTION OF THE VALUE OF LICENSE RENEWAL/RECERTIFICATION

ELEMENT MARKET RESEARCH, INC.



STUDY OVERVIEW

Background

- HRRI protects the public through regulatory research and collaborative exchange with strategic partners to promote evidence-based healthcare regulation.
- The organization has identified a need for information and intelligence related to practitioners' perceptions towards recertification and its importance in providing quality healthcare.

Objectives

- Gauge the value that practitioners see in recertification and relicensing for themselves and their colleagues, as well as patients.
- Understand how important recertifications of practitioners is to them and how often they believe it should be done now.
- Gauge the extent to which practitioners believe the recertification process is particularly arduous and perhaps unnecessary.
- Determine what, if anything, practitioners would change about the recertification and relicensing processes to make them better.
- Measure the extent to which the practitioners believe the public is familiar with recertifications and relicensing. Determine how important practitioners think recertifications are to patients.
- Understand the extent to which the practitioners feel patients would stop seeing a practitioner who had not been recertified recently if recertifications were optional.
- Determine whether practitioners believe recertifications are costly to them and ultimately reduce the number of healthcare practitioners in the marketplace.
- Profile respondents by employment and practice-related characteristics and use that information in subgroup analysis.

Methodology

- Online survey consisted of 28 questions with a mix of closed and open-ended questions. To qualify respondents had to:
 - Be U.S. residents
 - Work in healthcare as their primary role in one of nine provider types.
- 400 surveys completed August 27 - September 6, 2024:

Dentist (n=45)	Physical therapist (n=458)
Nurse / Nurse practitioner (n=50)	Physician (n=75)
Occupational therapist (n=19)	Physician Assistant (n=45)
Pharmacist (n=48)	Social worker (n=28)
Psychologist (n=45)	



KEY FINDINGS

Getting recertified and renewing their licenses seems to be important and valuable to most of the practitioners surveyed.

- Nearly all practitioners think it is important for them to get recertified; about 90% in total and 70% indicate it is “very important.”
- Majorities also feel it is valuable for practitioners like them to get recertified among four different lengths of time working in healthcare. The largest numbers believe it is valuable for practitioners of their type to get recertified if they have been practicing for more than five years.
- Very large majorities say it is valuable for them to go through the license renewal process; 85% in total and about 60% say it is “very valuable.”
- Nearly all say it is valuable for practitioners in their roles to go through the license renewal process every cycle, with fully about 60% indicating it is “very valuable.”

While the practitioners surveyed seem to go through recertification and license renewal along the timelines that are required of them, most believe that they should not need to do those activities as frequently as what is asked of them. Further, some practitioner types take more of an issue with the required recertification and license renewal frequency than do others.

- Over half say they are required to get recertified at least every two years, with physicians and PAs reporting longer requirements. Pharmacists and social workers are the group most likely to say they are required to get recertified every two years (about two-thirds).
- However, most practitioners—about two-thirds—feel they should be required to get recertified every three years or less often. Again, physicians and PAs are more likely to feel they should get recertified less often, while pharmacists and social workers are more likely to be in favor of getting recertified more frequently.
- PAs are the group that shows the largest difference between those who say they are required to get recertified/license renewed every two years vs. the percentage who believe they should have to go through the process that often.



- Majorities of practitioners indicate that they were last certified within the last two years and about 50% within the last year.
- In terms of license renewal, most indicate that they are required to renew their licenses at least every two years (about 80%), with physicians being least likely to indicate that (70%).
- As with recertification, a majority feel they should be required to renew their license every three years or less often. Physicians and PAs are most likely to feel that way, while physical/occupational therapists and pharmacists are most likely to be in favor of renewing at least every two years.
- As would be expected, despite their feelings about license renewal timelines, nearly all say they renewed their license within the last two years (about 90%) and most did so within the last year (approximately 70%).

While nearly all say they try to stay up-to-date about healthcare and counseling, their attitudes towards recertification and license renewal indicate that many would like an easier, less frequent, and less costly process.

- Nearly all say they try to stay up-to-date about medical innovations and practices and large numbers think it is more important for healthcare and counseling practitioners to be required to renew their licenses periodically than it is for people working in most other service industries.
- However, the following illustrates their dissatisfaction with the recertification and license renewal process:
 - Just under half agree that *"getting recertified is one of the primary ways I stay up-to-date on medical innovations and practices."*
 - And about the same percentage agree that *"renewing my license is one of the primary ways I stay up-to-date on medical innovations and practices."*

Many also do not feel that their patients know when they were last recertified/relicensed or that they make it easy for patients to find that information.

- Only about 40% of practitioners think their patients know when they last renewed their license and even fewer think they know when they were last recertified.

- Similarly, only 40% say they make it easy for their patients to see or find out when they last renewed their license and even fewer say the same thing about recertification.

Consistent with responses to open-ended questions about how they would want license renewal and recertification to change, the largest percentages feel those requirements cost a lot of money and take too much time.

- About 70% agree that *"the process of renewing my license costs a lot of money."*
- Just under 70% agree that *"the process of getting recertified costs a lot of money."*
- About 60% agree that *"the process of getting recertified takes a lot of time."*
- Half agree that *"the process of renewing my license takes a lot of time."*

While most practitioners believe their patients think recertification and license renewal are important to them, most don't think their patients are knowledgeable about the processes and do not think patients would stop seeing them if they chose not to get recertified.

- A large majority of practitioners believe that their patients think recertification and license renewal are important to them (about three-quarters).
- However, most also do not think their patients are knowledgeable about the recertification and license renewal process; about 80% believe they are "not too knowledgeable" or "not at all knowledgeable" combined.
- Interestingly, most practitioners feel that their patients would keep seeing them even if they chose not to get recertified.
- Asked how it would impact patients' perceptions if they chose never to get recertified, the largest percentage, by far, think it would not change perceptions at all. And, while nearly half think their patients would think about them more negatively if they chose never to get recertified, they are much more likely to think that would be just "more negatively" than "much more negatively."



In addition to some of the differences seen between practitioner types related to how often they must get recertified and their licenses renewed, and how they feel about the timelines for doing so, there are clearly other attitudinal differences between practitioner types. Specifically, physicians, PAs, and psychologists tend to see the processes as a nuisance, while occupational therapists, social workers, and pharmacists seem more likely to appreciate and embrace it.

- Physicians, psychologists, and physical therapists are slightly less likely than others to believe recertification is important, while occupational therapists, social workers, and nurses/NPs are more likely.
- Physicians and PAs are much less likely to feel that those practicing across various tenure groups should get recertified, while social workers, occupational therapists, nurses/NPs and pharmacists are more likely.
- Physicians and psychologists are least likely to see the value of license renewal, while occupational therapists and pharmacists are most likely. Likewise, physicians are least likely to believe that practitioners should go through license renewal every cycle, while physical/occupational therapists and pharmacists are most likely.
- Psychologists and PAs are particularly less likely to see the value in recertification and license renewal and to make it easy for patients to know when they last renewed. By comparison, pharmacists, occupational therapists, and social workers are the groups most likely to see recertification as a way to expand their knowledge and license renewal as a way to stay up-to-date.
- Physicians and PAs are most likely to agree with the statements concerning how much recertification and license renewal costs and how much time it takes to be compliant; occupational therapists and social workers react more positively.
- Physicians and PAs are half as likely as other practitioner types to feel recertification and license renewal are “very important” to their patients. By comparison, pharmacists and social workers are most likely to feel it is “very important” to patients.
- Pharmacists and psychologists are most likely to have confidence in their patients’ knowledge of the recertification and license renewal process.
- Pharmacists are also the group that is most likely to feel that their patients would stop seeing them if they did not get recertified.



RESPONDENT PROFILE

The characteristics of the practitioners surveyed are shown below.

Focus of Professional Time		Roles / Titles (multiple responses permitted)		Years in Healthcare		Age		Gender		Race / Ethnicity		Region	
Private outpatient office or group practice	44%	Clinical Practice	92%	1 to 4 years	7%	18 to 34	26%	Male	47%	White	81%	Northeast	23%
Health system or hospital-based outpatient facility / clinic	27%	Administrator	9%	5 to 9 years	29%	35 to 54	59%	Female	53%	Asian / Asian American	15%	South	36%
Acute Care Hospital / Inpatient Rehab Facility	8%	Faculty / Educator	9%	10 to 14 years	25%	55 or older	16%			Black / African American	6%	Midwest	18%
Academic institution	8%	Facility owner	6%	15 to 24 years	24%					Other	1%	West	23%
Telehealth	4%	Researcher	5%	25 years or more	16%					Hispanic, Latino/a, or Spanish origin* (asked separately)	5%		
Skilled Nursing Facility	3%	Other	1%										
Other	6%												

Descriptions Read by Respondents

The questions on this survey are going to focus on the value of recertification and license renewal for healthcare and counseling practitioners like yourself. Please read the following before answering the remainder of the survey questions.

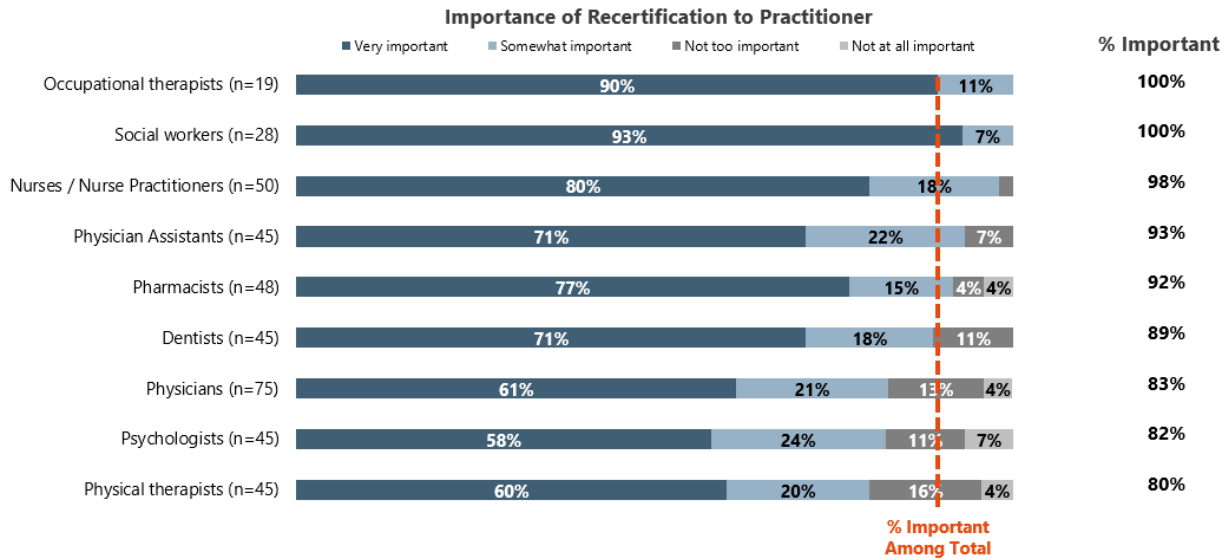
- Recertification:** Broadly speaking, board certification serves as a validation of expertise, and through recertification, healthcare practitioners and counselors can stay updated about medical and counseling innovations and practices and expand their knowledge base.
- License renewal:** Healthcare license renewal ensures legal authorization to practice healthcare within a jurisdiction. Renewal typically includes continuing competence activities to ensure that healthcare practitioners stay current with industry standards and best practices which can increase public safety and lead to better patient outcomes.



IMPORTANCE AND VALUE OF RECERTIFICATION

Importance of Recertification

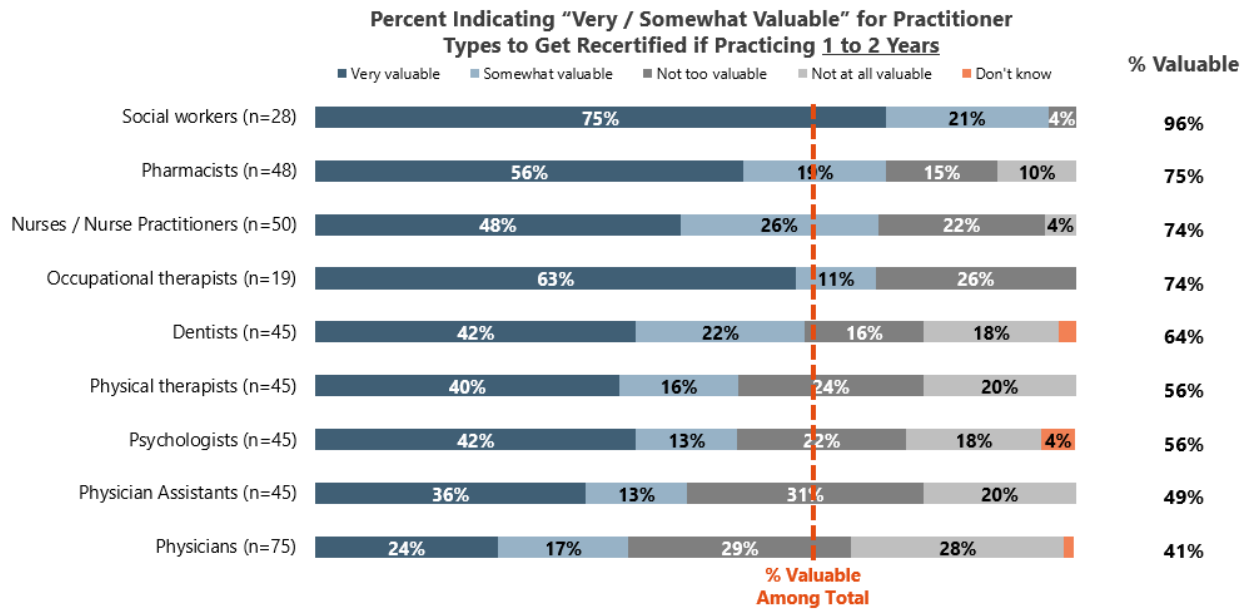
Nearly all practitioners think it is important for them to get recertified. Physicians, psychologists, and physical therapists are slightly less likely than others to believe it is important, while occupational therapists, social workers, and nurses/NPs are most likely



Value of Recertification After Various Years in Practice

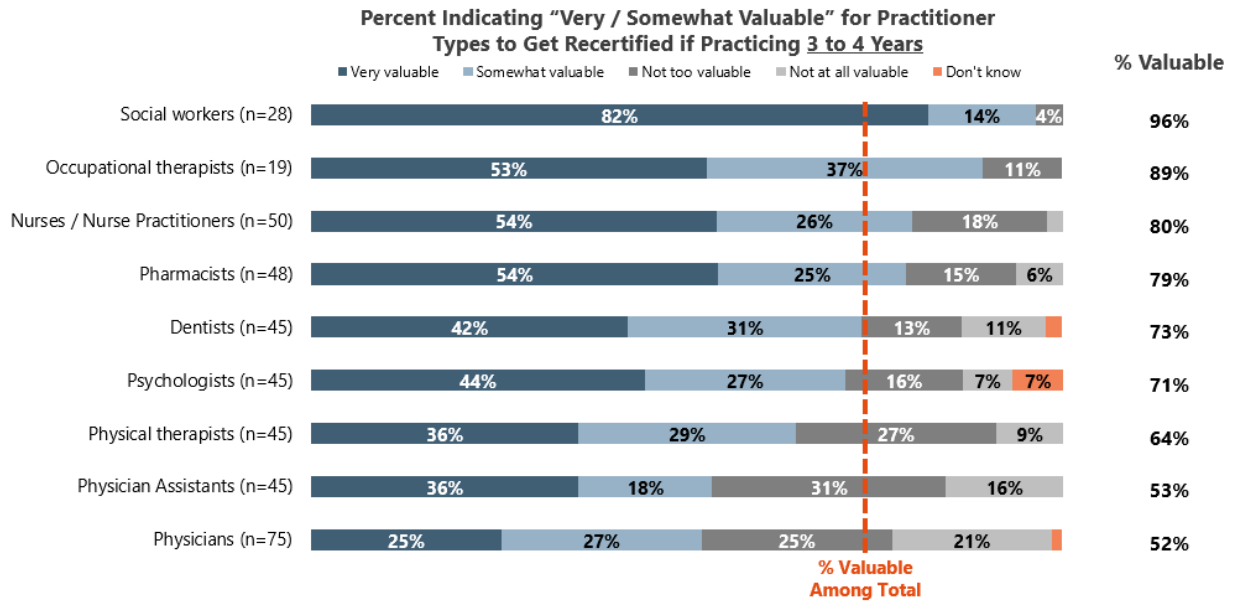
Practicing for 1 to 2 Years

Asked about the value of those who have been practicing for 1 to 2 years to get recertified, the results are wide ranging. Physicians and PAs are much less likely to feel that those practicing for 1 to 2 years should get recertified, while social workers are much more likely.



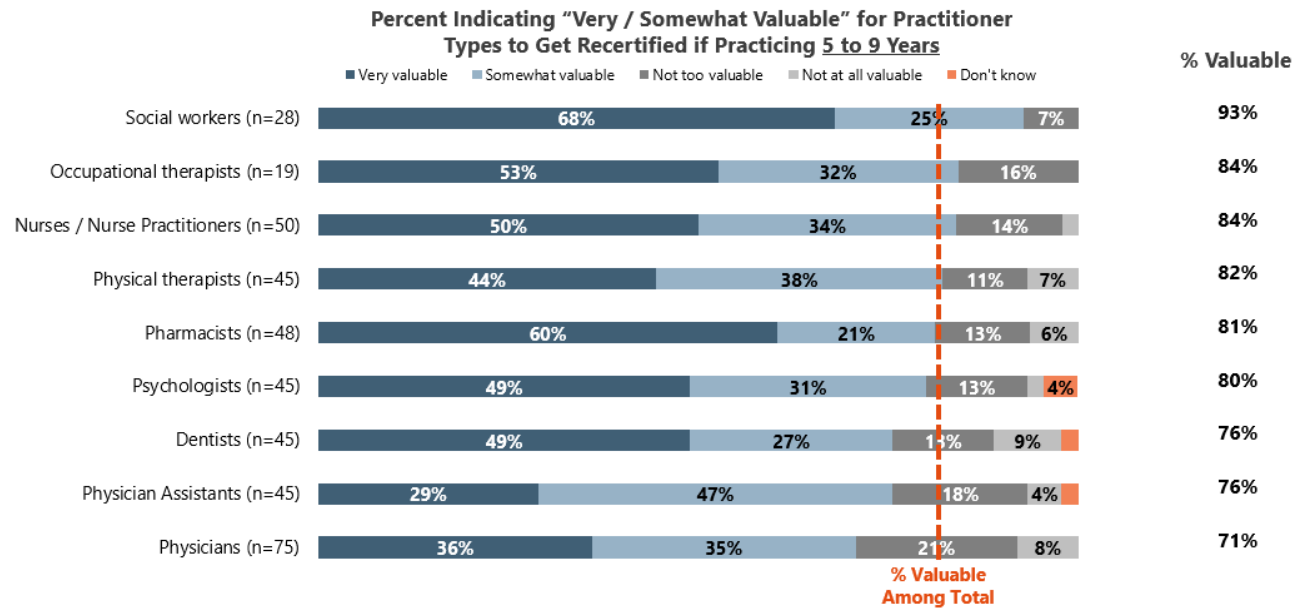
Practicing 3 to 4 Years

Similarly, when asked about the value of those who have been practicing for 3 to 4 years to get recertified, the results are wide ranging, though majorities find it valuable. Physicians and PAs are much less likely to feel that those practicing for 3 to 4 years should get recertified, while social workers are much more likely.



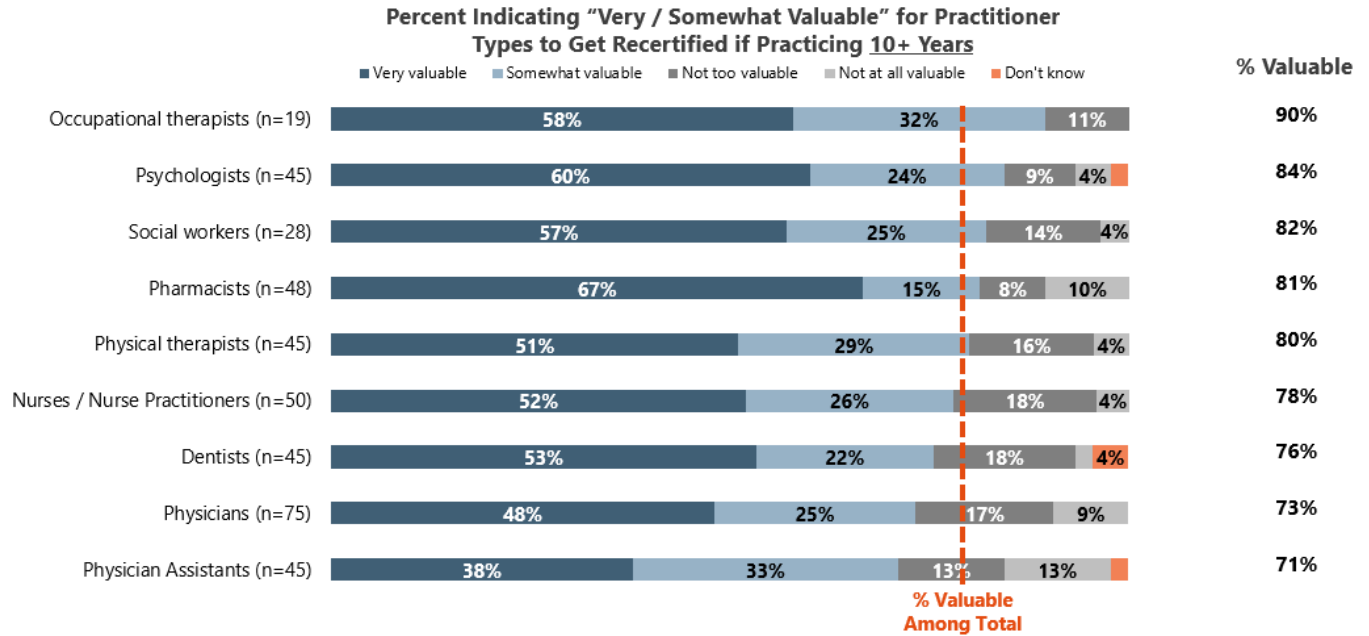
Practicing 5 to 9 Years

Practitioners across roles are more likely see value in those who have been practicing for 5 to 9 years to get recertified. Still, physicians and PAs are less likely to feel that those practicing for 5 to 9 years should get recertified, while social workers are much more likely.



Practicing 10 Years or More

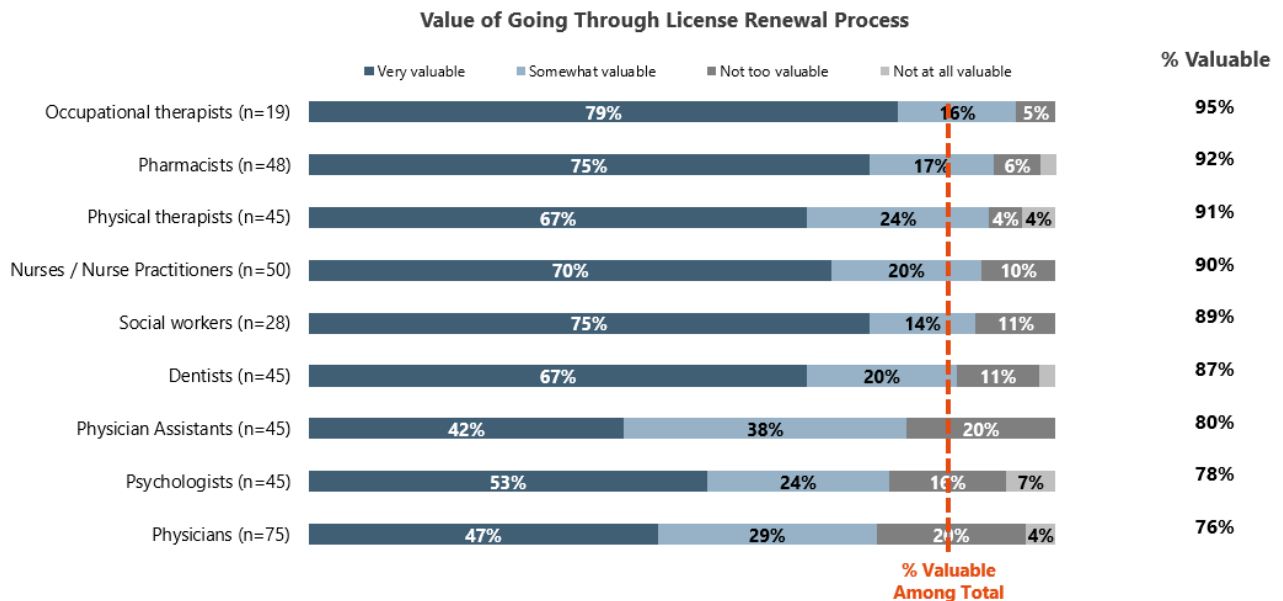
Large majorities of practitioners see value in those who have been practicing for 10 or more years to get recertified. Physicians and PAs are again less likely to feel this way.



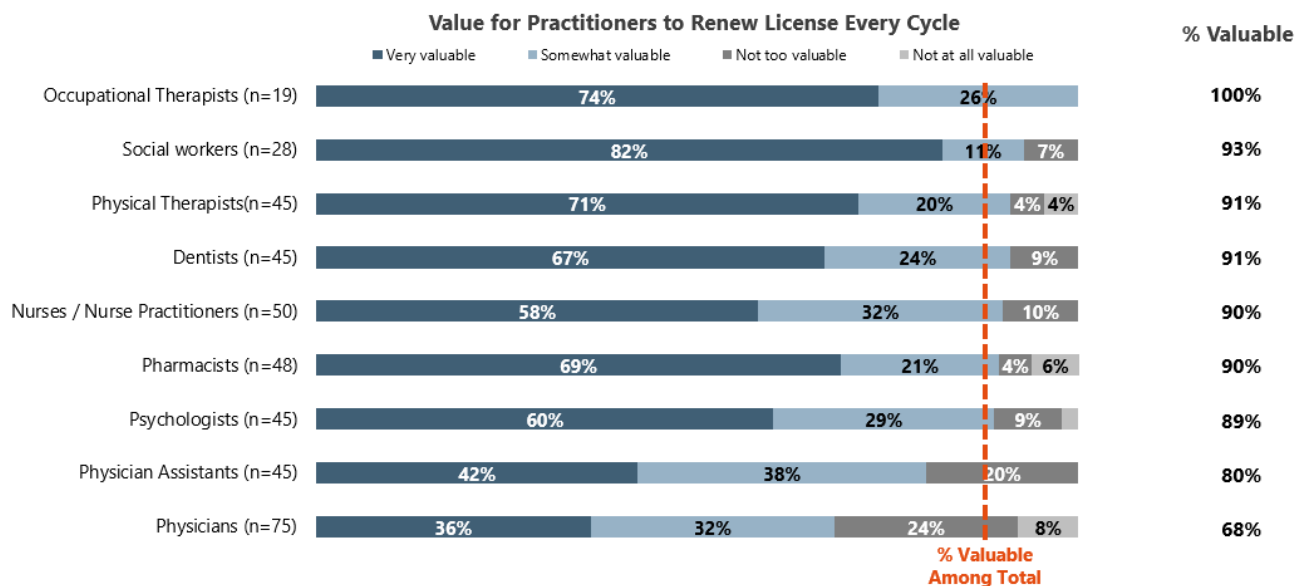
IMPORTANCE AND VALUE OF LICENSE RENEWAL

Value of Going Through License Renewal Process

Very large majorities say it is valuable to them to go through the license renewal process. Physicians and psychologists are least likely to see the value of doing so, while occupational therapists and pharmacists are most likely.



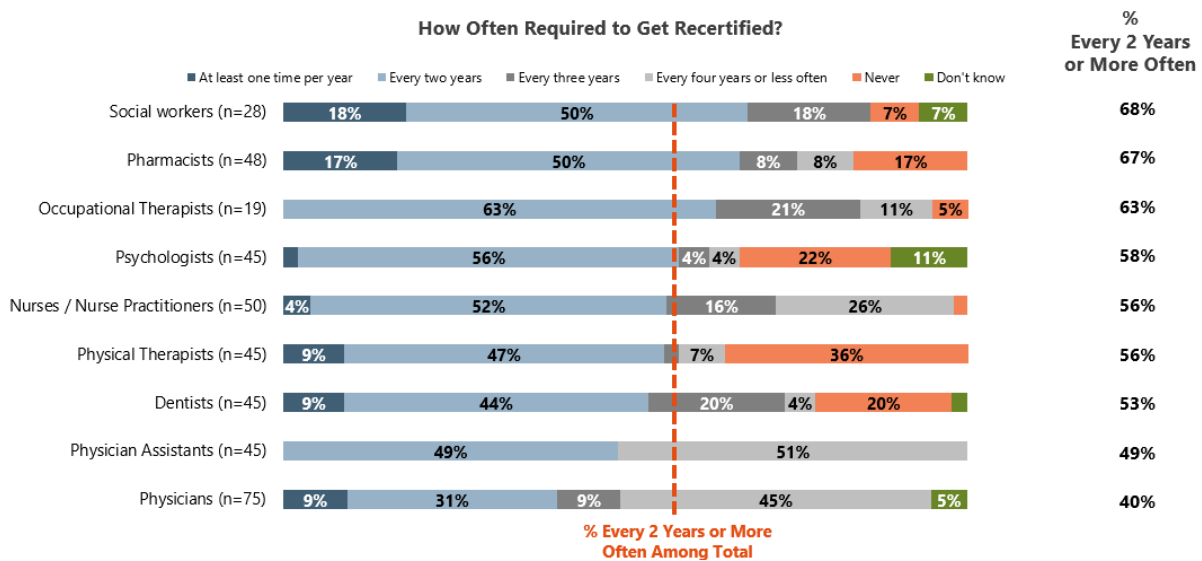
Nearly all say it is valuable for practitioners in their roles to go through the license renewal process every cycle. Physicians are least likely to believe this, while occupational therapists and social workers are most likely. Those who have been practicing at least 15 years are more likely than average to feel this is valuable.



FREQUENCY OF RECERTIFICATION

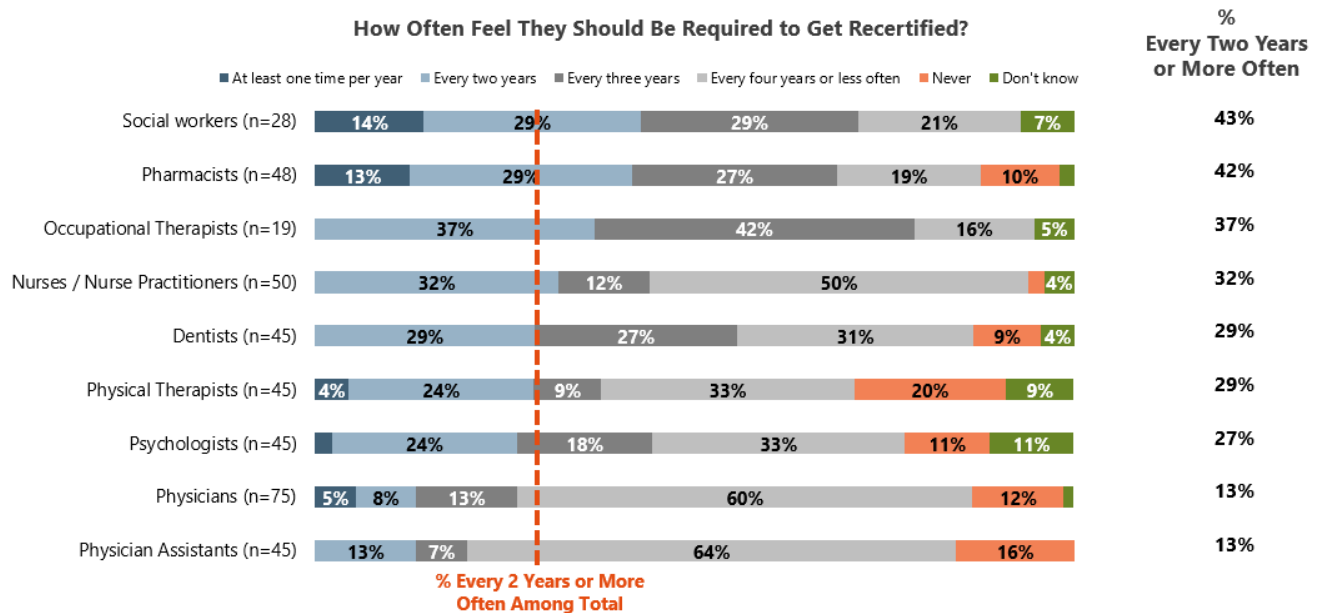
How Often Practitioners are Required to Get Recertified

In general, over half of practitioners say they are required to get recertified at least every two years. Physicians and PAs are least likely to report that they are required to get recertified that often; social workers and pharmacists are most likely.

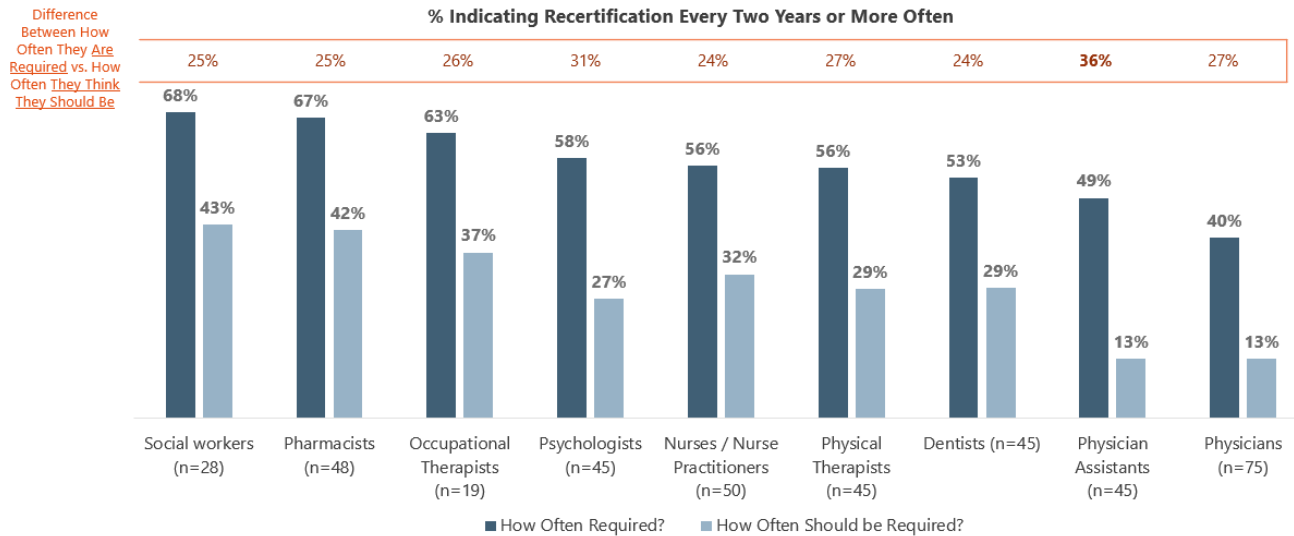


How Often Practitioners Feel They Should Be Required to Get Recertified

Despite the usual requirement, a minority of practitioners feel they should be required to get recertified every two years or less often. Physicians and PAs are more likely to feel they should get recertified less often, while more social workers, pharmacists, and occupational therapists are in favor of getting recertified more frequently.

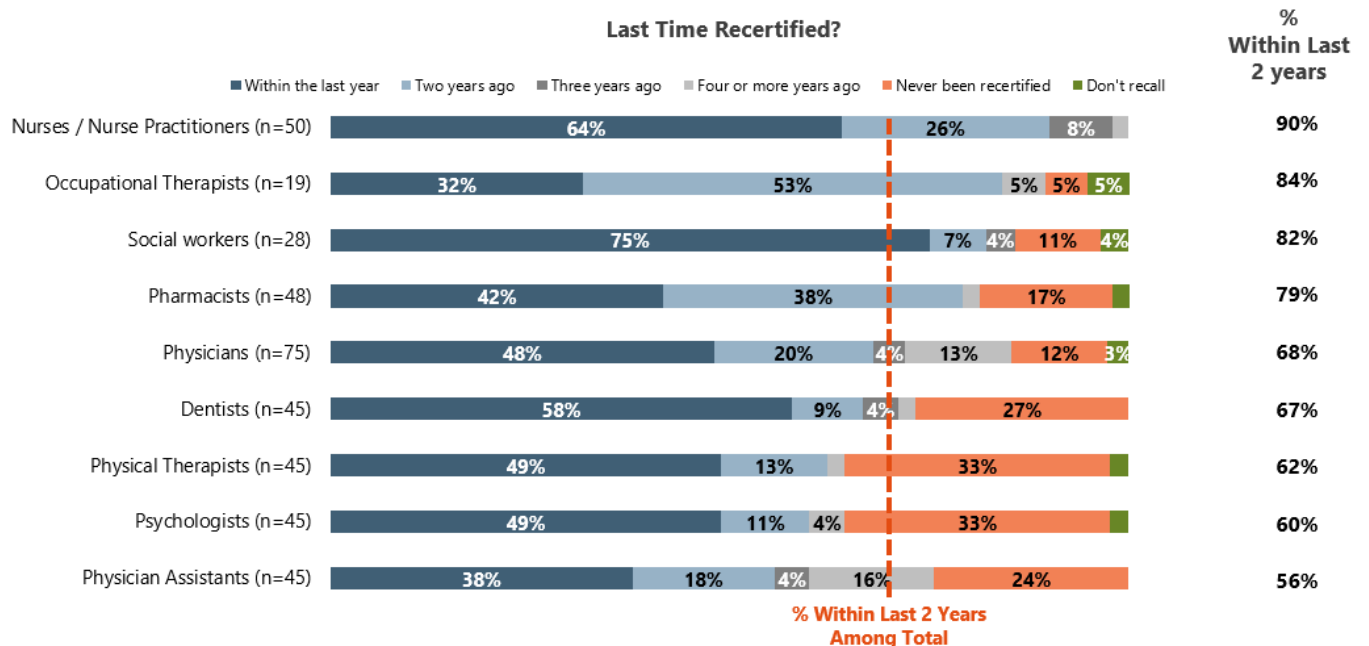


The percentage of practitioners who say they should be recertified at least every two years is much lower than the percentage who say recertification is required of them that often. The percentage point difference is highest for PAs (36%).



When Practitioners Were Last Certified

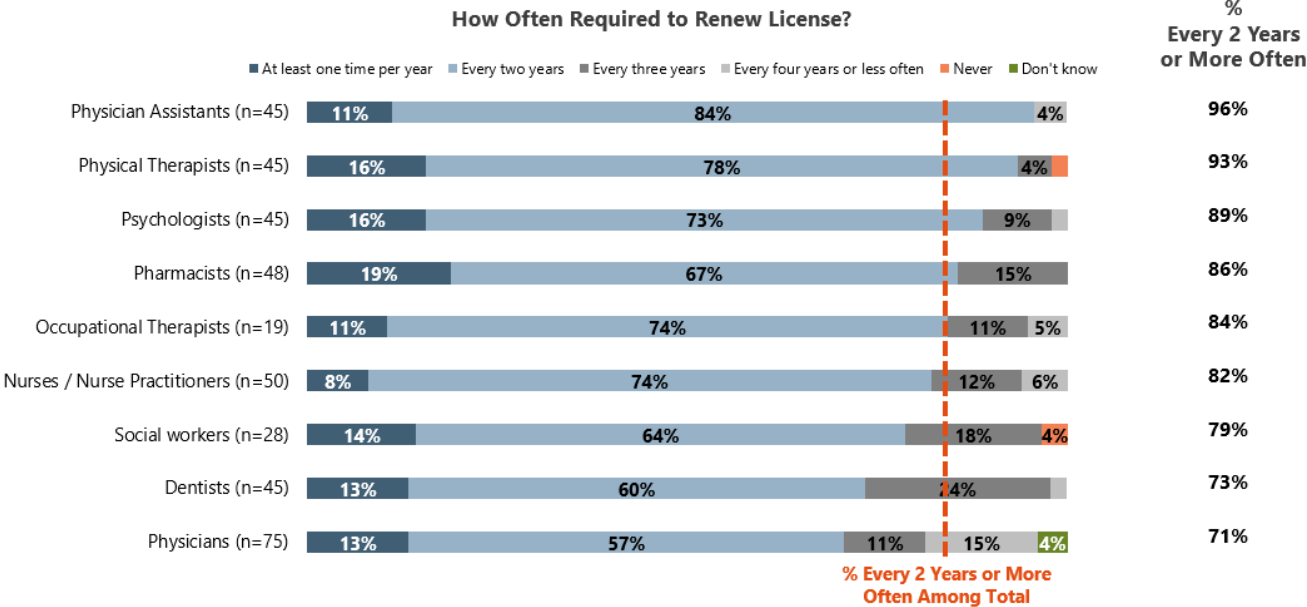
Majorities of practitioners indicate that they were last certified within the last two years, while many were within the last year. PAs are the least likely to indicate that they were recertified in that timeframe, while nurses/PAs are most likely.



FREQUENCY OF LICENSE RENEWAL

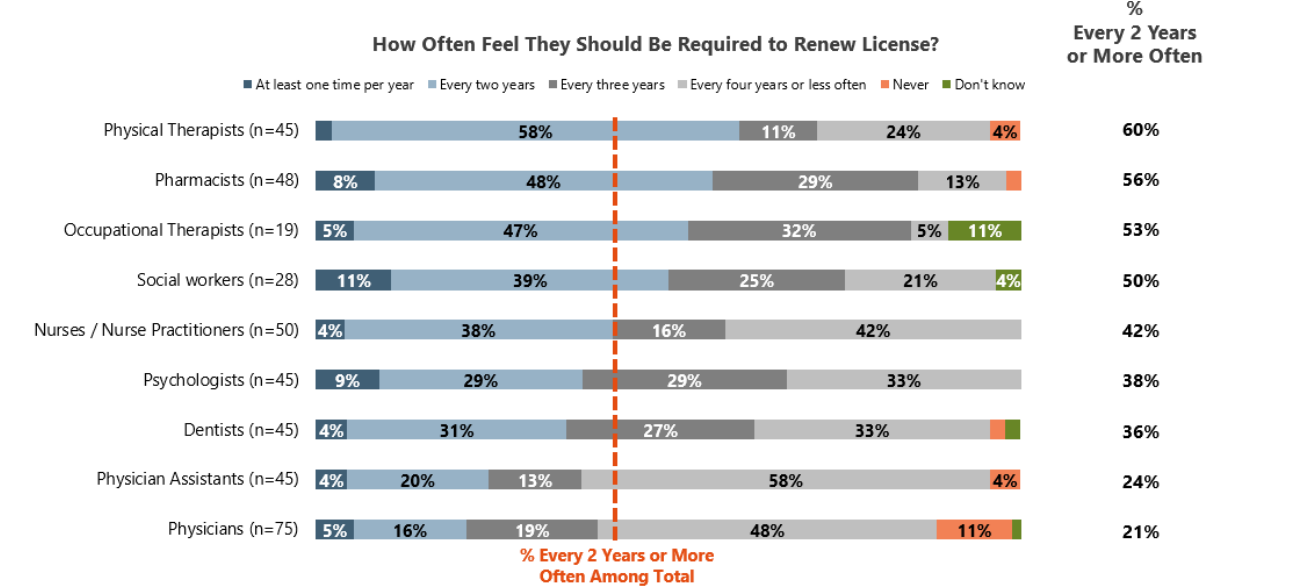
How Often Practitioners are Required to Renew Their Licenses

Most practitioners indicate that they are required to renew their licenses at least every two years. Physicians are least likely to indicate that it is that frequently for them, while nearly all PAs say they must renew at least every other year.

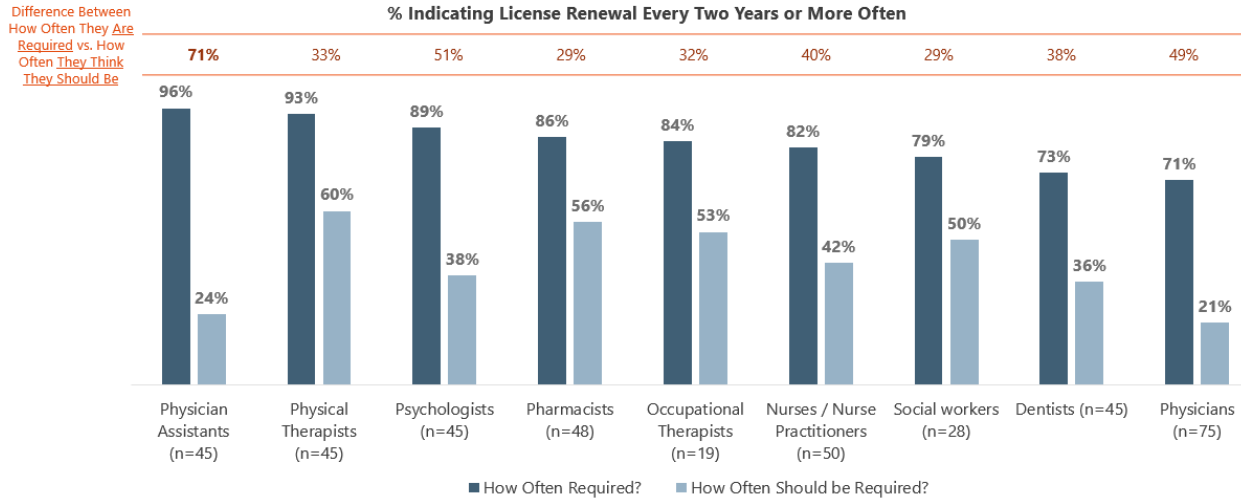


How Often Practitioners Feel They Should Be Required to Renew Licenses

The frequency with which practitioners feel they should be required to renew their licenses varies greatly by role. Physicians and PAs are most likely to feel it should be every four years or less often, while physical therapists, pharmacists, and occupational therapists are more in favor of renewing at least every two years.

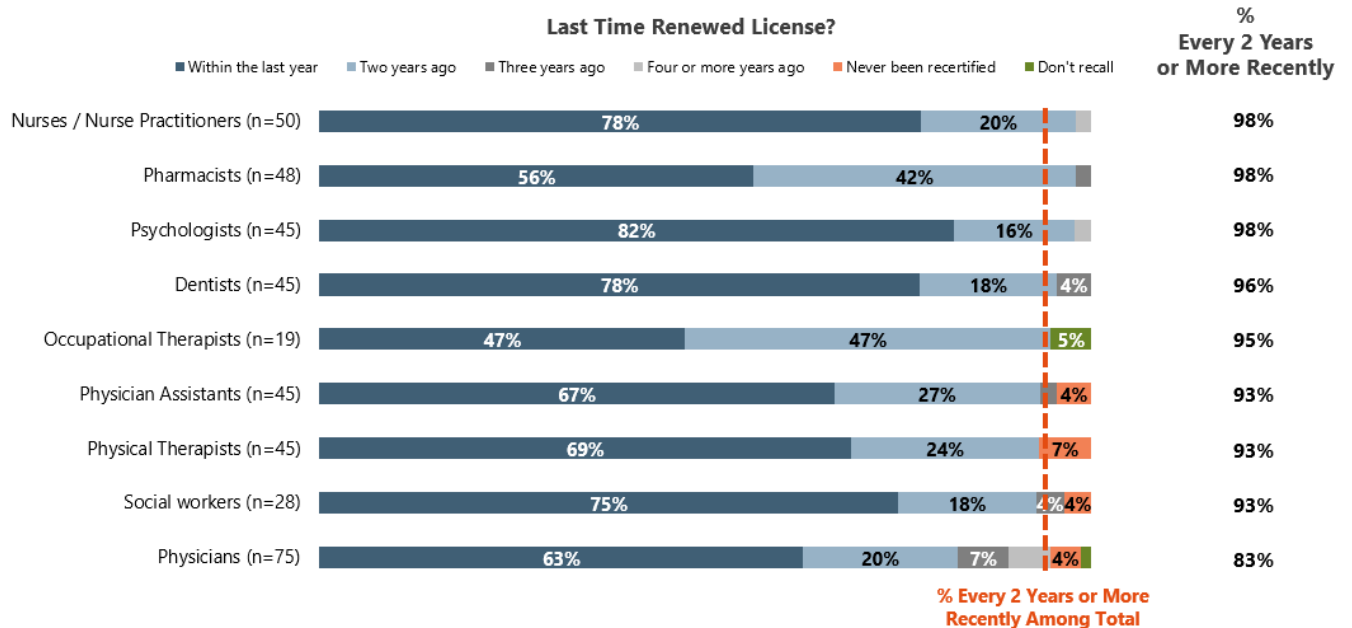


The percentage of practitioners who say they should renew their license at least every two years is much lower than the percentage who say license renewal is required of them that often. The percentage point difference is highest for PAs (71%), by far.



When Practitioners Last Renewed Their Licenses

Nearly all practitioners say they renewed their license within the last two years and most did so within the last year.



RECERTIFICATION & LICENSE RENEWAL CHALLENGES

Attitudes Towards Recertification and License Renewal

Nearly all say they try to stay up-to-date about medical innovations and practices. They are far less likely to say their patients know when they last were recertified/relicensed or that they make it easy for patients to find out.

Physicians and PAs are particularly less likely to see the value in recertification and license renewal and to make it easy for patients to know when they last renewed.

Percent "Agree Strongly/Somewhat"

	Physician (n=75)	Nurse/NP (n=50)	PA (n=45)	Pharmacist (n=48)	OT (n=19)	Social Worker (n=28)	Dentist (n=45)	PT (n=45)	Psych (n=45)	Total (n=400)
I try to stay as up to date as possible about medical innovations and practices.	95%	94%	98%	94%	84%	96%	96%	91%	93%	93%
It is more important for healthcare and counseling practitioners to be required to renew their licenses periodically than it is for people working in most other service industries.	64%	82%	60%	75%	63%	64%	78%	80%	49%	68%
Each time I go through the recertification process I expand my knowledge in ways that help me work with patients.	44%	62%	47%	81%	74%	50%	56%	47%	36%	55%
Getting recertified is one of the primary ways I stay up to date on medical innovations and practices.	43%	56%	29%	67%	79%	61%	47%	40%	38%	51%
I think most of my patients know when I was last recertified or could find out easily if they wanted to know.	40%	34%	18%	31%	42%	50%	24%	27%	29%	33%
I think most of my patients know when I last renewed my license or could find out easily if they wanted to know.	37%	34%	24%	46%	37%	61%	60%	42%	56%	44%
I would renew my license periodically even if it wasn't required by law.	35%	38%	33%	50%	47%	75%	42%	44%	38%	45%
I make it easy for patients to see or find out when I was last recertified.	32%	28%	24%	40%	42%	64%	44%	27%	24%	36%
I make it easy for patients to see or find out when I last renewed my license.	27%	30%	16%	50%	42%	61%	62%	40%	49%	42%
Renewing my license is one of the primary ways I stay up to date on medical innovations and practices.	25%	44%	29%	60%	68%	71%	51%	60%	49%	51%

Highest two percentages
 Lowest two percentages



The largest percentages feel that license renewal and recertification costs a lot of money, followed by those who say it takes a lot of time.

Again, physicians and PAs are most likely to agree with these statements. Occupational therapists and social workers are more likely than average to see value in recertification and relicensing.

Percent "Agree Strongly/Somewhat"

	Physician (n=75)	Nurse/NP (n=50)	PA (n=45)	Pharmacist (n=48)	OT (n=19)	Social Worker (n=28)	Dentist (n=45)	PT (n=45)	Psych (n=45)	Total (n=400)
The process of getting recertified costs a lot of money.	81%	76%	89%	58%	58%	50%	60%	53%	53%	64%
The process of getting recertified takes a lot of time.	76%	74%	87%	63%	32%	57%	40%	51%	47%	58%
The process of renewing my license costs a lot of money.	72%	68%	82%	56%	68%	54%	82%	64%	73%	69%
The process of renewing my license takes a lot of time.	61%	54%	51%	44%	42%	46%	33%	47%	56%	48%
The process of registering for continuing education classes takes a lot of time.	60%	54%	44%	35%	26%	32%	51%	27%	51%	42%
Getting recertified is so costly that it results in fewer people wanting to become or stay employed as healthcare practitioners or counselors.	51%	38%	22%	44%	26%	21%	16%	36%	29%	31%
<PRACTITONER TYPE> licensure renewal is unnecessary because renewal doesn't really help us.	49%	32%	36%	38%	5%	18%	40%	16%	36%	30%
Being recertified does not make me a better practitioner.	48%	34%	40%	31%	32%	25%	29%	33%	47%	35%
<PRACTITONER TYPE> getting recertified is unnecessary because recertification doesn't really help us.	43%	22%	24%	25%	21%	14%	31%	36%	42%	29%
I have found that the educational content covered during the recertification process rarely applies to my practice.	41%	28%	53%	40%	11%	14%	18%	11%	24%	27%

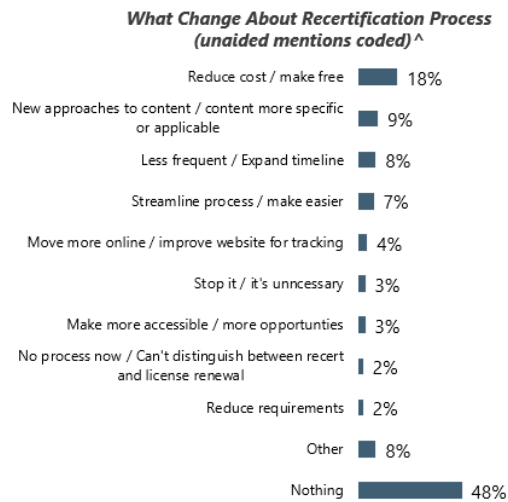
Highest two percentages
 Lowest two percentages



Recommended Changes to Recertification Process

Asked what they would change about the recertification process, the largest percentage of those responding would like the cost to be reduced (or make it free), followed by making the content more specific and applicable to them and making recertification less frequent.

PAs are more likely than other groups to make suggestions about how to change the recertification process.



Sample Concerns or Barriers Verbatims

"Cost less. Maybe include CME courses relevant to specialty or have recertification be specific to specialty."

"Having to do 100 CE hours is insane and so costly. For example, through ASCP (who are only one of two providers who offer board certified geriatric recertification credit), a 1.5-hour CE costs \$35. Do the math, that's almost \$2,400!"

"I just don't feel like I take much away from the trainings. Usually, I just try to get through them to get the certification at the end. Maybe if it weren't so expensive I would be interested in doing more trainings - so lower the cost?"

"It is costly, time consuming and irrelevant to clinical practice."

"The cost of the courses, recertification process and time away from work for often very little new material makes it less cost effective/ useful for my profession and license."

"There needs to be a more streamlined method for recertification and slight reduction of costs. I do think that the category 1 requirements are necessary, so physicians continue to upkeep their up-to-date medical knowledge."

"I don't think recertifying makes me a better practitioner. The answers to the questions asked are rarely how we practice in real life."

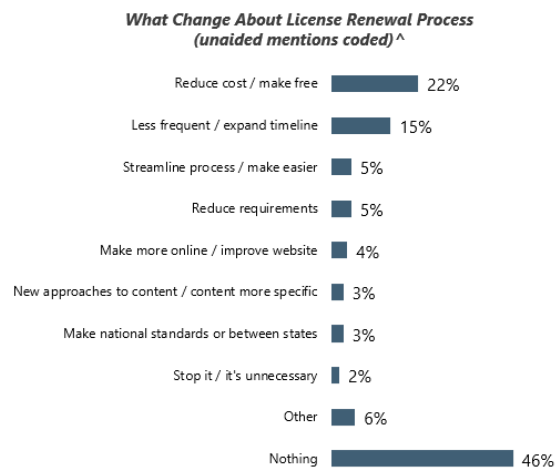
"The bar for recertification is so low that it does nothing to prove that a pathologist is still competent to practice medicine."

"Making use of extremely qualified people in a particular specialty as resource persons."

Recommended Changes to License Renewal Process

Similarly, when asked what they would change about the license renewal process, reducing the cost and expanding the timeline are named most often.

PAs are more likely than other groups to make suggestions about how to change the relicensing process.



Sample Concerns or Barriers Verbatims

"Renewing both RN, APRN licensure, and prescriptive authority every 2 years is very costly. Renewing less often or reducing the cost would make it more valuable."

"There is nothing about license renewal that is valuable. It just feels like a money grab."

"The license renewal process is just a way for the government to collect money from providers. There is no accountability for CEs. Maybe if there was, then it would be worth it. In either way, it is duplicitous and unnecessary if you also need to recertify in your profession."

"Same as the recert process. I would reduce the costs. CEUs are expensive enough. Adding another fee to keep working just feels like extortion."

"I don't feel that mandatory CEUs makes me a better therapist. I take CEUs to learn more about how to be a better therapist, having to do it for licensure is secondary. It is also very costly and our job does not help with the cost anymore."

"Offer more no cost CE courses. Offer online classes that cover new advances/ profession updates maybe in a full day course."

"The fees are unnecessarily high. Especially because dentists are required to renew every 2 years! Additionally, other licenses need to be renewed as well such as the DEA and controlled substances so the fees add up."

"Extended time periods between renewals. Have free CME courses that are quality pertaining to specific specialties."

"I think our licensing board should have a system that allows you to update CE's as you earn them. This helps you track progress along the way, ensuring you are prepared for renewal when the time comes."

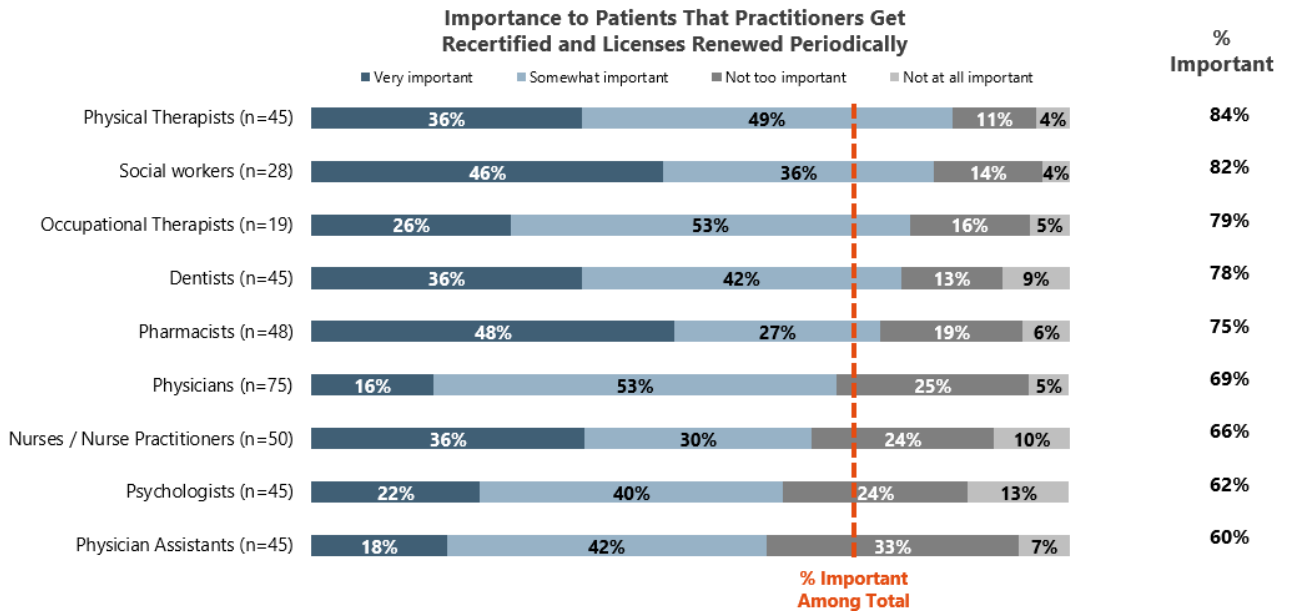


HOW PATIENTS FEEL ABOUT RECERTIFICATION & LICENSE RENEWAL

Perceived Importance to Patients

A large majority of practitioners believe that their patients think recertification and license renewal are important to them.

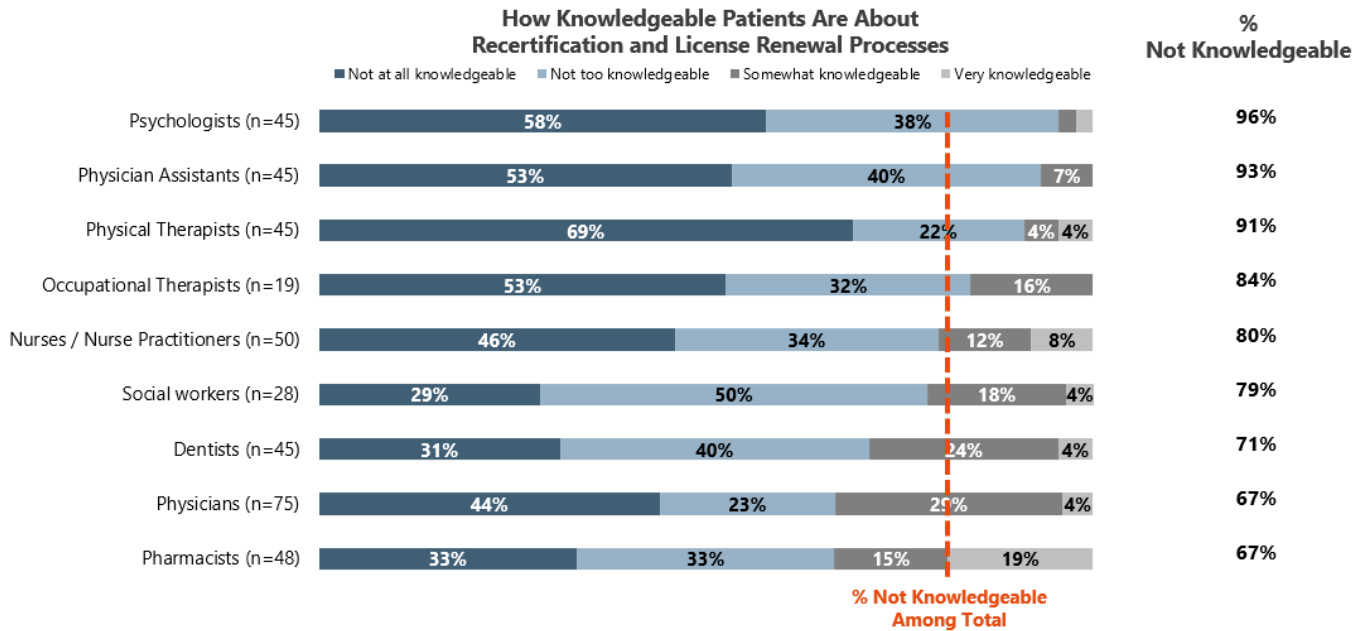
Physicians and PAs are half as likely as most other practitioner types to feel it is “very important” to their patients. Pharmacists and social workers are most likely to feel it is “very important” to patients.



Perceived Knowledge Patients Have About Recertification / License Renewal

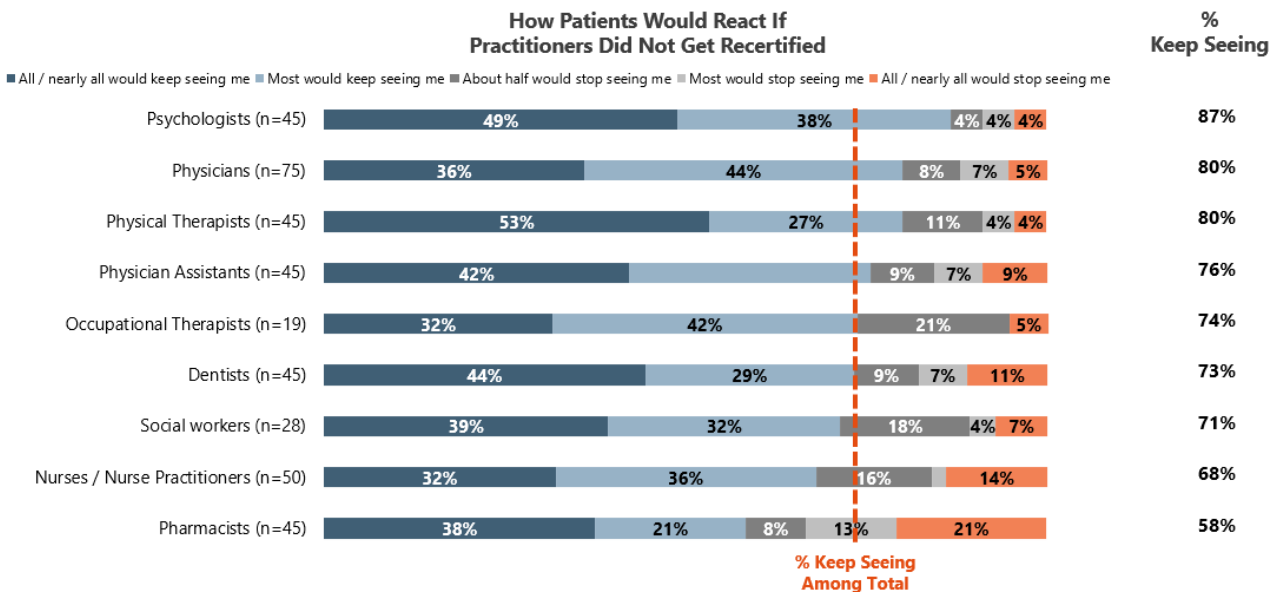
Large majorities of practitioners do not think their patients are knowledgeable about the recertification and license renewal process.

Pharmacists and physicians are most likely to have confidence in their patients' knowledge of the recertification and license renewal process, while psychologists, PAs, and physical therapists are least likely.



Whether Patients Would Keep Seeing Practitioners Who Do Not Recertify

Most practitioners feel that their patients would keep seeing them even if they chose not to get recertified. Consistent with other findings, pharmacists are the group most likely to feel that their patients would stop seeing them if they did not get recertified, while psychologists, physicians, and physical therapists are less likely.



Whether Patients Would Keep Seeing Practitioners Who Do Not Recertify

Asked how it would impact patients’ perceptions if they chose never to get recertified, the largest percentage, by far, think it would not change them. Nearly half think their patients would think about them more negatively, though only a few “much more” so.

Those under age 35 are more likely to feel their patients would think of them more negatively.

