



Georgia Board for Physician Workforce Fact Sheet on Medical Education in Georgia February 2008

Is Georgia really facing a physician shortage?

YES! Georgia is facing many challenges when it comes to achieving an optimal supply, specialty mix, and distribution of physicians. The state's population is growing rapidly, baby boomers are nearing retirement, and Georgia's capacity to train physicians lags significantly behind other states. Consider the following:

- Georgia ranks **9th in population**, but **39th in total physician supply/licensed physicians per 100,000 population** (down from 37th). (Source: AMA *Physician Characteristics and Distribution in the U.S. 2008 Edition*. Georgia's ranking is 40th in the number of patient care physicians per capita. Note: The District of Columbia is not counted in these rankings.) The U.S. Census Bureau currently ranks Georgia as the 5th fastest growing state.

How does Georgia compare to other states in the area of physician training capacity?

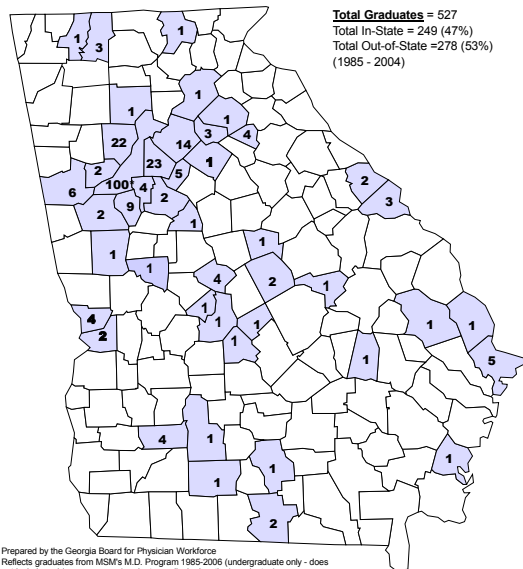
- Georgia continues to rank well below the national average in the number of medical students per 100,000 population. According to data from the Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC), Georgia ranks **34th among the 46 states** that have a medical school **in the number of medical students per 100,000**. (Source: AAMC Center for Workforce Studies; *2007 State Physician Workforce Data Book*; November 2007.)
- Georgia's medical student to population ratio of 20.5 per 100,000 is significantly below the national average of 29.2 per 100,000. (Source: AAMC Center for Workforce Studies; *2007 State Physician Workforce Data Book*; November 2007.) However, as the osteopathic medical school (Philadelphia College of Osteopathic Medicine, Georgia Campus) builds to a total enrollment of approximately 320 students, Mercer opens its Savannah campus, MCG expands, and Morehouse and Emory increase class size, Georgia should see its ratio improve.
- Georgia ranks **37th among the 50 states in residents per 100,000**. Georgia's rate of 20.7 residents per 100,000 is well below the national average of 35.6 residents per 100,000. (Source: AAMC Center for Workforce Studies; *2007 State Physician Workforce Data Book*; November 2007.) **In order to reach the national average, Georgia would have to add approximately 1,300 new residency positions!**
- **Only one of the surrounding states** (Florida at 16.9) **has a resident to population ratio lower than Georgia's** 20.7 per 100,000. Tennessee's rate is 33.7, North Carolina is 31.7, Alabama's rate is 26.7, and South Carolina is 23.5 residents per 100,000 population. (Source: AAMC Center for Workforce Studies; *2007 State Physician Workforce Data Book*; November 2007.)

How does Georgia compare to other states with respect to retention of medical school and residency program graduates?

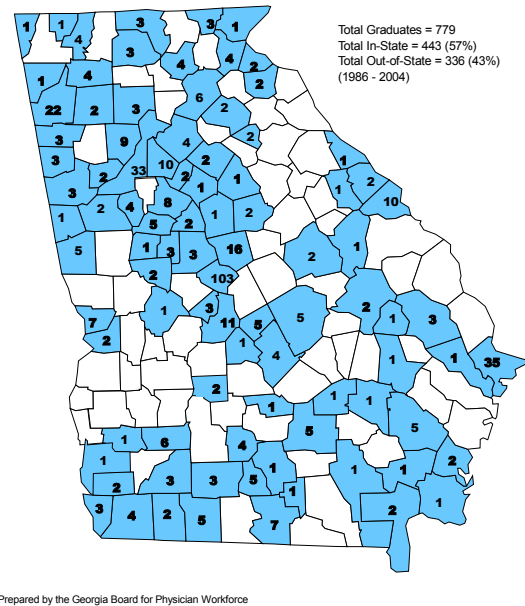
- Medical school enrollment has increased by approximately 7% since FY 2004. Georgia's medical schools produced 393 graduates in FY 2007, up from 365 in FY 2004.
- On average, about 1/3 of Georgia's medical school graduates stay in Georgia to complete their residency training.

- Nationally, the average retention rate for medical school graduates is 39%. Based on the national benchmark, Georgia's medical schools rank 12th in the nation with a combined average retention rate of 47.5%. (Source: AMA Physician Masterfile, January 2007.)
- Mercer only accepts Georgia residents and historically, approximately 57% of Mercer's graduates remained in Georgia to practice medicine upon completion of their training (see the map below for geographic distribution).
- Morehouse is one of four predominately black medical schools in the nation. Historically, approximately 47% of Morehouse graduates remained in Georgia to practice medicine upon completion of their training (see the map below for geographic distribution).

Morehouse School of Medicine
Alumni Practicing in Georgia (all specialties)
As of June 30, 2007



Mercer University School of Medicine
Alumni Practicing in Georgia (all specialties)
As of June 30, 2007



- The Medical College of Georgia is the state's only public medical school and MCG graduates the largest number of medical students each year. Data from the American Medical Association (AMA) indicates Georgia ranks 6th nationally in retaining graduates of public medical schools with approximately 52.9% of MCG's medical school graduates practicing in Georgia. (Source: AMA Physician Masterfile - January 2007.)
- The AMA data also shows approximately 38.1% of Emory University School of Medicine M.D. graduates are practicing in Georgia. (Source: AMA Directory of Physicians in the U.S.: 2006 CD-ROM. Reflects data as of June 2005.)
- With respect to residents remaining in state to practice, the national average retention rate is 47.2%. Based on the national benchmark, Georgia's GME Programs rank 14th in the nation with a combined average retention rate of 49.1%. (Source: AMA Physician Masterfile, January 2007.)

Where should the state focus its energy and resources in the future?

Increasing medical school enrollment alone will not meet Georgia's need for physicians. The state must also engage and invest in a coordinated effort to add residency training positions. Otherwise, the impact of Georgia's medical school expansion efforts will be lessened.

For more information, please contact the Georgia Board for Physician Workforce at (404) 206-5420 or 1718 Peachtree St, NW, Suite 683, Atlanta, Georgia 30309.