



Georgia Board for Physician Workforce

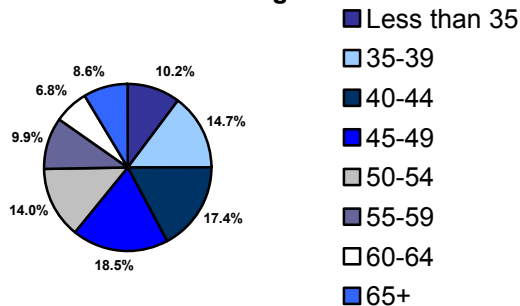
Characteristics, Specialty Mix, & Distribution of the Physician Workforce

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Characteristics of Georgia's Physician Workforce

Demographic changes and different work preferences among physicians present important challenges, which must be considered when examining the overall capacity of the physician workforce and its ability to meet the needs of the state. Georgia's population is growing rapidly, yet the state's physician supply remains stagnant. Any reduction in physician work hours would mean effective declines in the overall physician workforce and the potential for reduced access to care. Georgia must recognize and anticipate reductions in physician work hours due to the pending retirement of older physicians and the increasing presence of women in the field of medicine.

Physician Workforce: 2002 Age Distribution



Georgia's physician workforce is aging. With a mean age of 47 and the fact that baby boomers comprise 75% of the physician workforce, Georgia could see a significant portion of its doctors retire in the next five to ten years. This means new doctors must be trained or recruited to serve Georgia's growing population.

- Research shows that work habits differ across generations. Physicians in the baby boom generation have traditionally exhibited a willingness to work long hours and a tendency to give work precedence over family and quality of life issues. New physicians entering the workforce today place greater emphasis on spending time with family and on leisure activities. Accordingly, a drop in average hours worked is anticipated as new physicians replace retiring physicians.
- Another change in the physician workforce is the increasing presence of women. This change is also anticipated to cause overall reductions in the work provided by physicians. Research is beginning to show that the practice patterns of male and female physicians differ. Women still bear the majority of responsibility for family and home life, and correspondingly, female physicians tend to limit work hours or take time off to focus on family responsibilities.

Physicians by Gender

Year	% Male	% Female
1992	84.6	15.4
1994	83.8	16.2
1996	81.6	18.4
1998	80.0	20.0
2000	79.0	21.0
2002	79.1	20.9

Increasing Diversity

- Georgia has achieved some success in diversifying its physician workforce. The percentage of African-American physicians rose from 6.5% to nearly 12%, and the proportion of those reporting to be "other" ethnicities increased more than four-fold since 1992. However, Census figures indicate additional effort is needed to make Georgia's physician workforce more reflective of the population. For example, nearly 30% of Georgians are African-American, compared with only 12% of the physician workforce.

Percentage of Physicians by Race

Year	% White	% African American	% Asian	% Other
1992	86.5	6.5	6.3	0.7
1994	84.9	7.6	6.6	0.9
1996	84.1	8.1	6.9	0.9
1998	80.2	8.9	7.8	3.1
2000	79.0	10.3	8.1	2.6
2002	77.4	11.9	7.7	3.0

- With increased diversity, there is a greater need for physicians to be able to transcend cultural and language barriers and work effectively with patients in order to diagnose medical conditions and deliver appropriate healthcare.

Specialty Mix and Distribution of Physicians

Georgia has experienced considerable growth in most primary care specialties over the last decade; however, challenges with the geographic distribution of physicians persist. Physician distribution remains more favorable in urban than rural parts of the state. This issue is of critical importance to Georgians, since the distribution of physicians helps determine access to healthcare.

- The rate of physicians in five core specialties varies significantly between Metropolitan Statistical Areas (MSA's) and Non-MSA's.
- For example, the rate of Pediatricians per 100,000 population is more than 8.7 times greater in Georgia's MSA's than Non-MSA's.

Georgia Physician Workforce 2002 Selected Specialties by MSA/ Non-MSA Designation				
Specialty	MSA		Non-MSA	
	Number	Rate*	Number	Rate*
Family Practice	1,650	19.3	521	6.1
Internal Medicine	2,167	25.3	342	4.0
Pediatrics	1,348	15.7	147	1.8
OB/GYN	973	11.4	165	1.9
General Surgery	615	7.2	111	1.3

While Georgia's supply of primary care physicians has increased over the last ten years, there have been declines in the per capita rates of other specialties as highlighted in the table below. These declines indicate an emerging shortage for certain specialties, including the core specialty of General Surgery.

Physicians per 100,000 Population for Select Specialties 1992-2002						
Specialty	1992	1994	1996	1998	2000	2002
Allergy & Immunology	1.02	1.05	0.98	0.83	0.87	1.24
Anesthesiology	9.06	10.48	10.22	9.84	9.56	8.93
Cardiovascular Diseases	4.94	5.54	5.45	4.83	4.73	4.28
Diagnostic Radiology	3.15	3.82	4.16	4.07	3.24	3.17
Emergency Medicine	6.31	7.74	7.84	8.41	8.94	8.81
Family/General Practice	22.52	25.04	26.27	26.52	26.18	25.36
Gastroenterology	2.57	2.77	2.73	2.55	2.65	2.10
General Surgery	8.63	9.29	9.59	9.26	9.42	8.48
Internal Medicine	18.34	20.08	23.83	25.79	27.66	29.30
Nephrology	1.38	1.45	1.51	1.41	1.28	1.43
Neurological Surgery	1.59	1.58	1.54	1.53	1.34	1.39
Neurology	2.60	2.99	3.37	3.35	3.19	3.22
Obstetrics/Gynecology	10.22	11.63	12.25	11.82	12.04	13.29
Oncology	1.44	1.74	1.69	1.57	1.58	1.75
Orthopedic Surgery	6.32	6.99	7.62	7.20	6.79	6.89
Pediatrics	10.61	11.77	13.37	16.75	17.13	17.46
Psychiatry	8.49	10.21	11.42	11.04	11.14	10.45
Pulmonary Diseases	1.70	2.10	2.03	1.92	1.92	1.67
Radiology	4.61	4.85	5.13	4.89	5.86	5.15
Rheumatology	0.74	0.92	0.83	0.76	0.75	0.60
Thoracic Surgery	0.49	0.59	0.49	0.42	0.43	1.08
Urological Surgery	3.32	3.59	3.44	3.42	3.04	3.06
Total Rate of Physicians per 100,000 Population in GA	164	182	192	193	192	193

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