



Availability of Primary Care Physicians in North Dakota

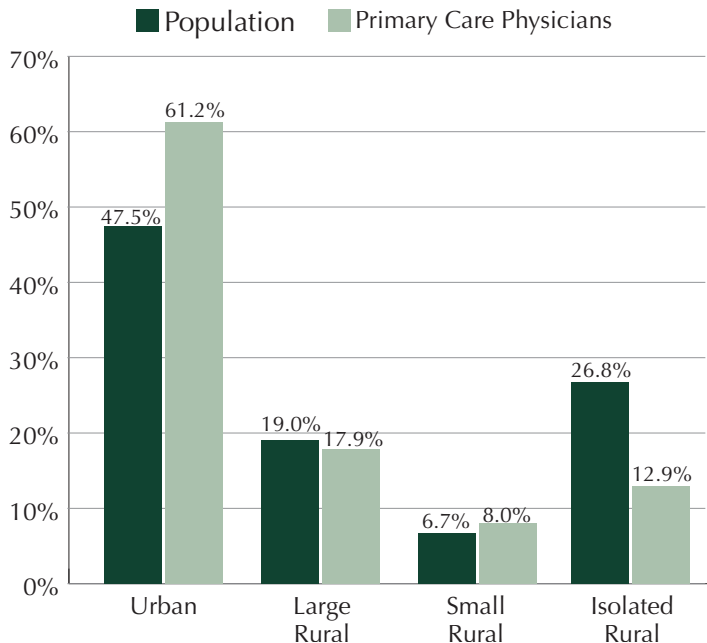
This fact sheet was developed using 2011 data from the American Medical Association Master File. An updated version of this information using 2013 data is available on Fact Sheet Number 21 in this series.

Primary care physicians are defined as those practicing in family/general practice (FP/GP), general internal medicine (GIM), and general pediatrics (Gen Ped) in 2011.

In 2011 there were 552 active direct patient primary care physicians in North Dakota. Of those, 338 (61.2%) were in urban areas, 99 (17.9%) in large rural areas, 44 (8.0%) in small rural areas, and 71 (12.9%) in isolated rural areas.

In general, urban areas are defined as those with a population greater than 50,000. Larger rural areas have a population between 10,000 and 49,999; small rural between 2,500 and 9,999; and isolated rural are populations less than 2,500.

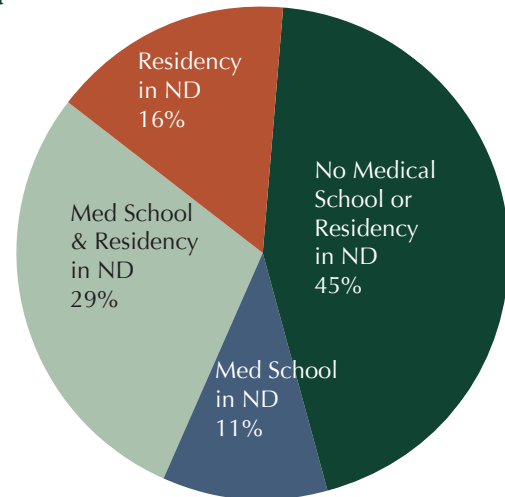
Figure 1. Comparison of percents of primary care physicians associated by rural/urban status of North Dakota population



- The greatest primary care disparity is in isolated rural areas, which have 27% of the population but only 13% of the primary care physicians.

- Nearly two-thirds (61%) of North Dakota's primary care physicians practice in urban areas where 48% of the population resides.

Figure 2. Location of medical school and residency for primary care physicians currently practicing in North Dakota



- Urban areas have the highest rate of primary care physicians to population ratio (1.1 per 1,000). The ratio in large rural is .8, small rural is 1.0, and isolated rural is 4 per 1,000.
- Over half (55%) of North Dakota practicing primary care physicians received either medical school or residency training (or both) in North Dakota. The comparable percent for North Dakota's non-primary care physicians is 29% (259).
- Of the primary care physicians practicing in North Dakota, 40% went to medical school in North Dakota and 45% did their residency in North Dakota.
- Nearly one-third (29%) of the primary care physicians practicing in North Dakota obtained both their medical school and residency training in North Dakota.

Table 1. Age and sex of primary care physicians in North Dakota by rural/urban status.

	All		Female		Male		Age
	N	%	N	%	N	%	Mean
Urban	338	67%	111	33%	227	67%	48.2
Large Rural	99	68%	32	32%	67	68%	49.0
Small Rural	44	70%	13	30%	31	70%	51.8
Isolated Rural	71	70%	21	30%	50	70%	52.2
All	552	68%	177	32%	375	68%	49.1

- Primary care physicians in small and isolated rural areas are slightly more likely to be male (70%).
- Primary care physicians in small and isolated rural areas are older than their urban counterparts.

Table 2. Specialty of primary care physician by rural/urban status

	FP/GP		GIM		Gen Ped	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Urban	176	52%	111	33%	51	15%
Large Rural	64	65%	21	21%	14	14%
Small Rural	32	73%	9	20%	3	7%
Isolated Rural	54	76%	14	20%	3	4%
All	326	59%	155	28%	71	13%

- Over half of the primary care physicians are in family medicine or general practice (59%).
- Three-fourths of the primary care physicians in small and isolated rural areas practice in family medicine/general practice.
- One-third of the urban primary care physicians are in general internal medicine.
- The percentage of general pediatric primary care physicians is twice as high in urban and large rural areas as in small/isolated rural areas.

Conclusions

The urban areas of North Dakota have 61% of the primary care physicians but only 48% of the population and a far greater proportion of the state's non-primary care physicians. The population of North Dakota's small and isolated rural areas has disproportionately fewer primary care physicians per person than their urban counterparts. Statewide, only about a third of the primary care providers are female.

Data

The physician data are from the 2011 American Medical Association's Physician master file.

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