Primary care physicians are defined as those practicing in family/general practice (FP/GP), general internal medicine (GIM), and general pediatrics (Gen Ped) in 2013. In 2013, there were 582 active primary care physicians in North Dakota. Of these physicians, 381 (65%) practiced in urban areas, 104 (18%) in large rural areas, 41 (7%) in small rural areas, and 56 (10%) in isolated rural areas. There are 201 primary care physicians in all rural areas combined, which represents 35% of all primary care physicians in North Dakota.

- There are over twice as many patients per primary care physician in small/isolated rural areas compared to urban areas.
- The largest absolute difference is for small/isolated rural versus urban family physicians per population (1,202).

- GIM and Gen Ped primary care physicians are more likely to practice in urban areas (73% and 76%) than FP/GP physicians (59%).
- By far, FP/GP primary care physicians are more likely to be practicing in isolated rural areas than are GIM and Gen Ped physicians.
- Compared to 2011 data, there is an overall decrease in practice in large and small/isolated rural areas, while there is an increase in urban areas for primary care physicians.
Conclusions

Figure 4. Average Age of Primary Care Physicians for Rural/Urban Status within Four Regions of North Dakota

- Primary care physicians in small/isolated rural areas are older than elsewhere in the state.
- The highest mean ages for primary care physicians are in small/isolated rural areas of northeast and southwest North Dakota.
- Primary care physicians average the youngest in northeast North Dakota (45.6) urban areas (i.e. Grand Forks).
- More than two-thirds (65%) of North Dakota’s primary care physicians practice in urban areas.
- Family Practice/General Practice physicians are relatively more likely to work in small/isolated rural areas.
- Primary care physicians in small and isolated rural areas are older, especially in small and isolated rural areas of the northeast and southwest portions of North Dakota.

Data

The physician data is from the 2013 American Medical Association physician master file. Urban, large rural, small rural, and isolated rural are defined using Rural-Urban Community Areas. (depts.washington.edu/uwrural)

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