

Alaska Physician Workforce

Alaska Has a Shortage of Medical Doctors

Alaska has a shortage of medical doctors.

Increasing GME in Alaska has been recommended to address this shortage.

Medical Students are Not Doctors

Medical students are in undergraduate medical education (UME).

Medical students pay tuition, receive grants, or have post-training service obligations.

Medical students receive a medical doctor (MD) or doctor of osteopathy (DO) degree when graduating.

New medical school graduates are not ready to provide patient care without supervision.

Graduate medical education (GME) is commonly referred to as medical residency or fellowship.

Medical residents take care of patients and are supervised by senior physicians.

All states require two or three years of graduate medical education (GME) prior to medical licensure.

Medical Residents are Doctors

Approximately one in seven US physicians is in a GME program (14.3%).

Medical residents provide 20% of hospitalized care for patients and 40% of care for patients without insurance.

Medical residents provide \$8.4 billion in patient care per year.

Medical residents provide patient care on weekdays, weekends, nights, and holidays.

Medical resident salaries depend on training program and year in training.

Employing medical residents may be less expensive than employing non-physicians.

More GME Increases the Number of Doctors

Medical residents have developed strong community roots by the end of GME training.

Medical residents usually remain in the communities where they train.

57.1% of medical residents remain in the state where they trained.

The Alaska Family Medicine Residency (AFMR) has one of the highest retention rates of any residency.

Approximately 70% of AFMR trainees remain in Alaska after training.

AFMR graduates work in clinical settings across Alaska including rural and critical access sites.

More than 27% of Alaska's family medicine physicians completed AFMR training.

Alaska Physician Demographics

In 2020, there were 2,101 active physicians in Alaska.

15.7% of Alaska's population is Alaska Native or Native American but only 2.1% of Alaska's physicians identify as Alaska Native or Native American.

Increasing the number of Alaska Native and Native American physicians requires increasing GME in Alaska.

In 2020, 34.2% of Alaska's physicians were 60 years or older.

12% of physicians retire before age 60 and 42% retire before age 65.

Alaska will not be able to recruit enough new physicians to replace retiring physicians to maintain current physician to population ratios.

Physician Recruitment to Alaska

There is a national shortage of physicians and health care organizations compete to recruit physicians.

Physician turnover and recruitment are expensive.

Alaska physician vacancy durations are often months to a year or longer.