



General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
Joint State Government Commission
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Medical School Impact on the Primary Care Physician Shortage in Pennsylvania
Short Summary

The nation faces a mounting shortage of physicians. This is especially true for primary care physicians. Between 7,800 and 48,000 additional primary care physicians are needed to cover this shortage by 2034. The primary care shortage also extends to the Commonwealth, where there are currently 143 Primary Care Health Professional Shortage Areas. Pennsylvania's medical schools will play a vital role in supplying the physicians needed to meet this demand.

In this report the training needed to become a primary care physician is examined. Additionally, the issues believed to be behind the shortage of primary care physicians are investigated, such as burden of student loan debt, burnout, and low investment in primary care. Residency and demographic data, along with information on primary care initiatives collected from the Commonwealth's medical schools are presented. The report includes information on the average number of graduates matching into primary care specialties from each institution, an estimate of how many graduates intend on working in the primary care field, and how many are retained by the state.

The report concludes that current data collection efforts on primary care workforce in the Commonwealth are often insufficient and should be improved. Recommendations to increase the number of primary care physicians working throughout the Commonwealth are also discussed. These recommendations include encouraging medical schools to promote primary care, funding physician recruitment efforts, and expanding pipeline programs to raise interest in primary care among students. Further, this report recommends easing the burden of student loan debt on new graduates in primary care field by increasing awards made under the Commonwealth's student loan repayment program.

The full report is available on our website.

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