

The Physician Shortage Crisis: A National Perspective

Michael Dill

Director, Workforce Studies

AAMC

Outline



1

Physician shortage

2

Geographic distribution

3

Underlying causes of shortage

4

Understanding retention

5

Conclusion

Outline



1

Physician shortage

2

Geographic distribution

3

Underlying causes of shortage

4

Understanding retention

5

Conclusion

The currently projected national shortage

Total shortage: up to 86,000 physicians

Primary care shortage: up to 40,400 physicians

Outline



1

Physician shortage

2

Geographic distribution

3

Underlying causes of shortage

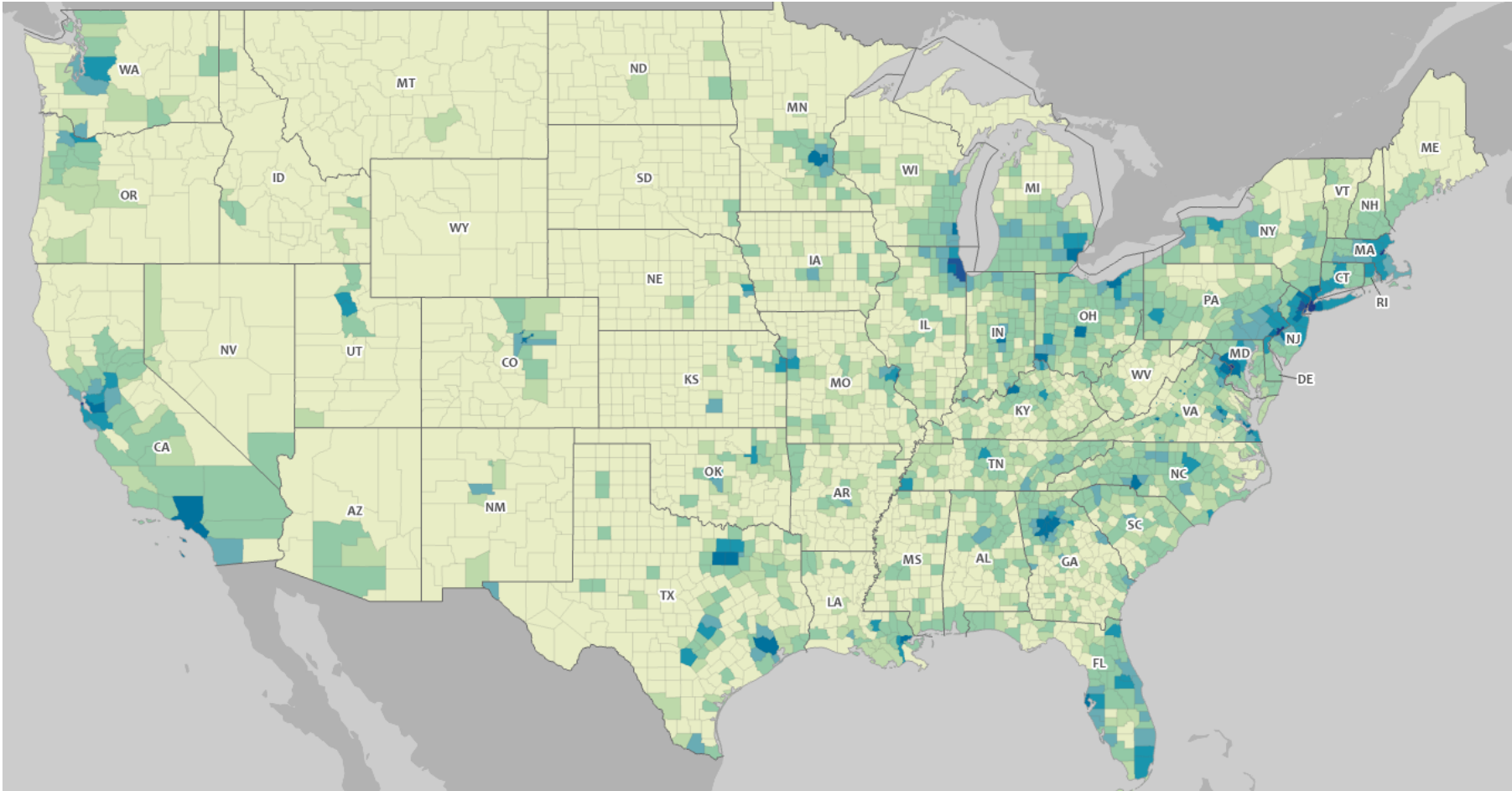
4

Understanding retention

5

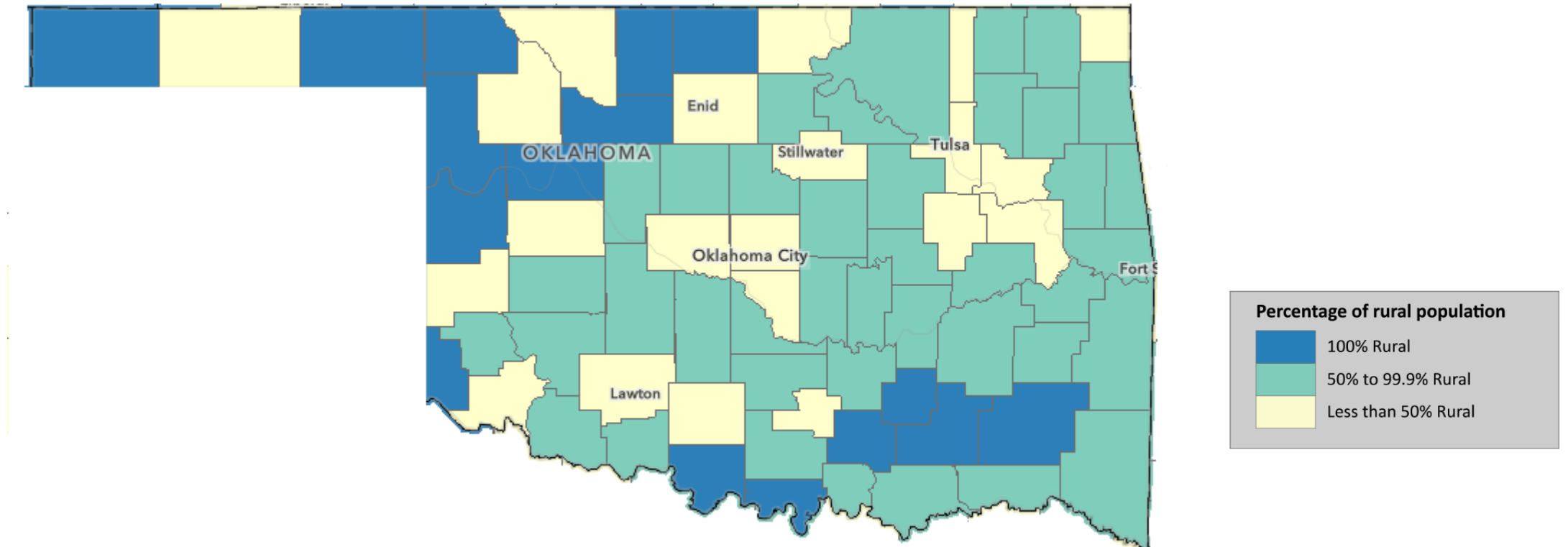
Conclusion

Geographic distribution at the national level



Source: US Bureau of the Census. [2020 Census Demographic Data Map Viewer](#). Persons per square mile by county, 2020.

Geographic distribution at the state level



Outline



1

Physician shortage

2

Geographic distribution

3

Underlying causes of shortage

4

Understanding retention

5

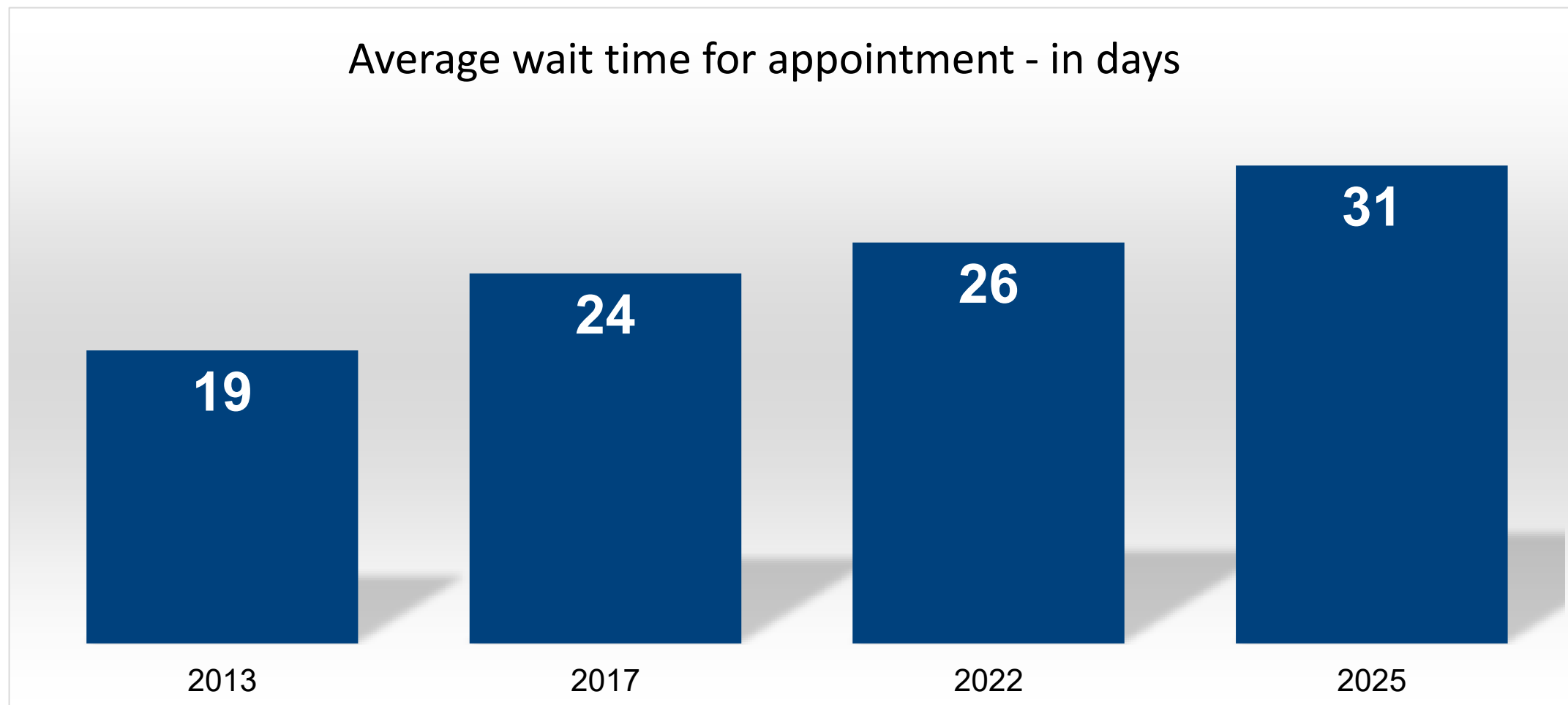
Conclusion

The underlying causes of the shortage

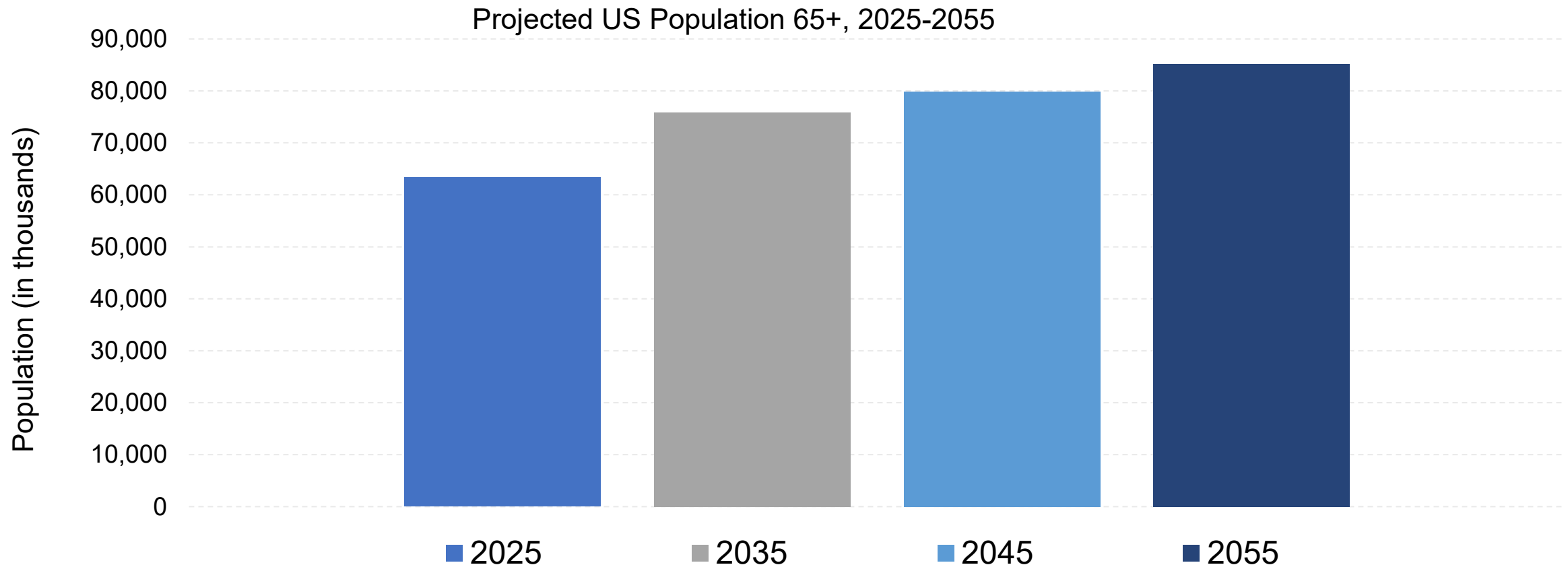
Supply

Demand

Evidence of the shortage: we are waiting longer

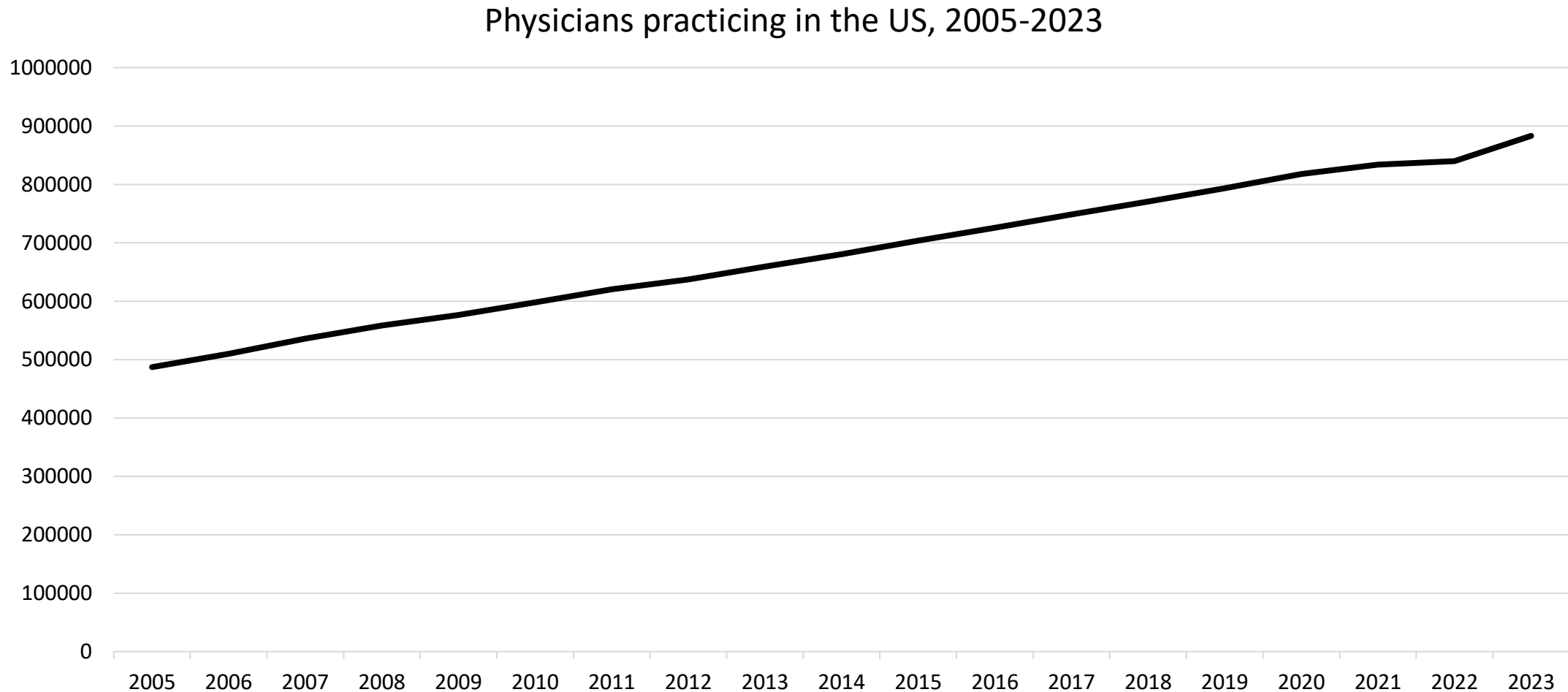


U.S. Population Drives Demand

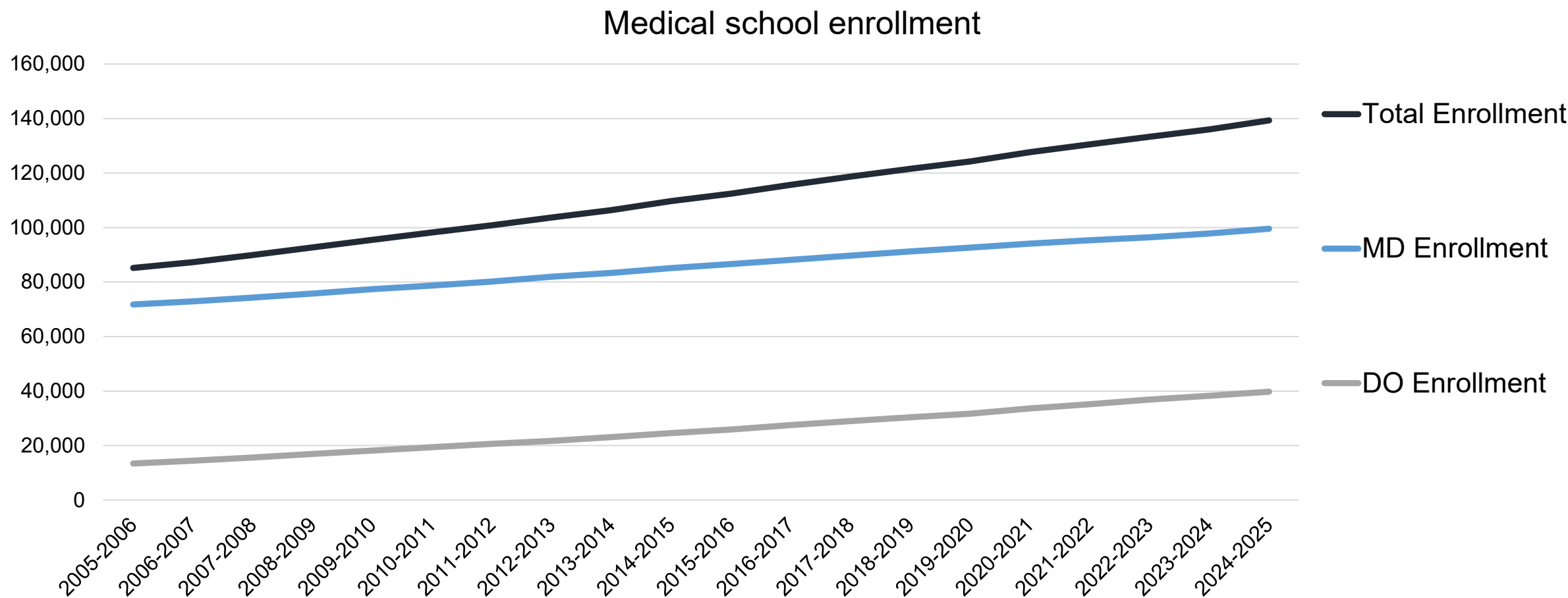


Source: US Bureau of the Census, National Population Projections, Table 2, Projected Population by Age Group and Sex. [2023 National Population Projections Tables: Main Series](#).

Number of physicians in the US has grown steadily

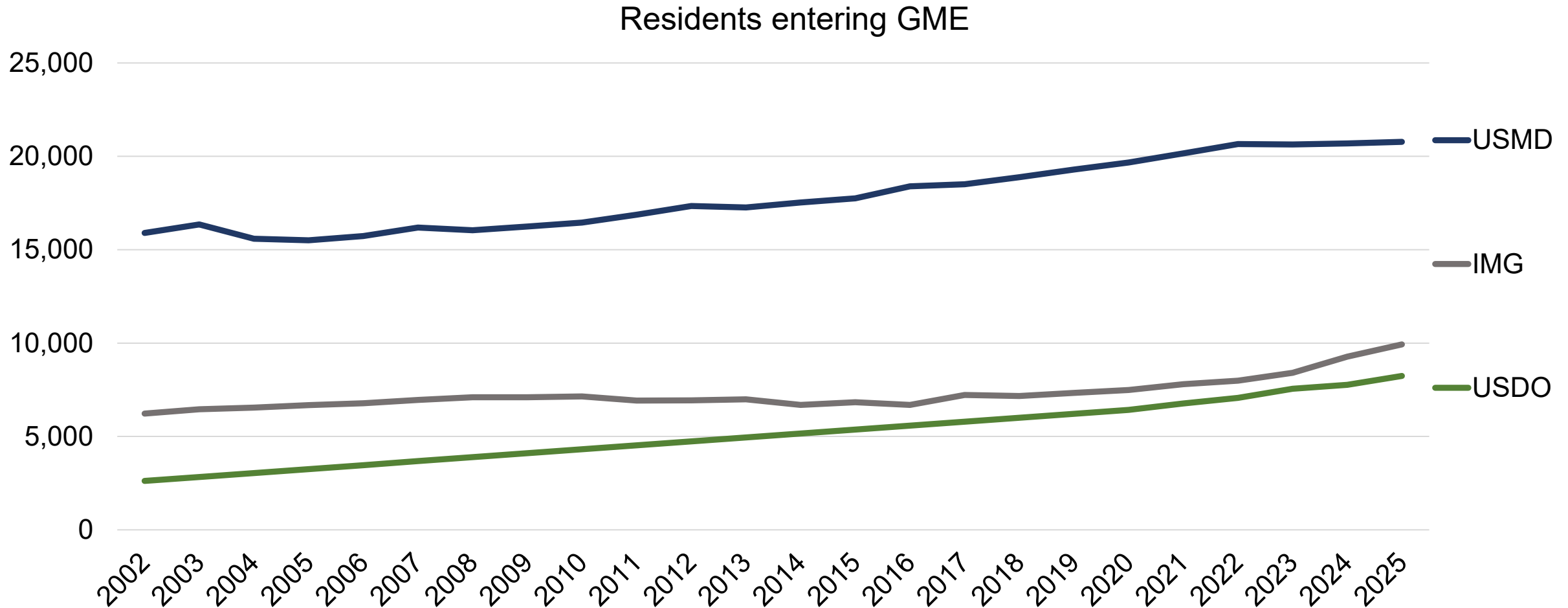


Medical school enrollment has risen steadily



Source: AAMC FACTS Data; AACOM Application Services.

Graduate Medical Education is the bottleneck



Source: ACGME Data Resource Books; AAMC estimates of entrants to AOA residencies, 2002-2019.

Production of new physicians already not keeping pace with aging population



Outline



1

Physician shortage

2

Geographic distribution

3

Underlying causes of shortage

4

Understanding retention

5

Conclusion

The physician shortage in Oklahoma



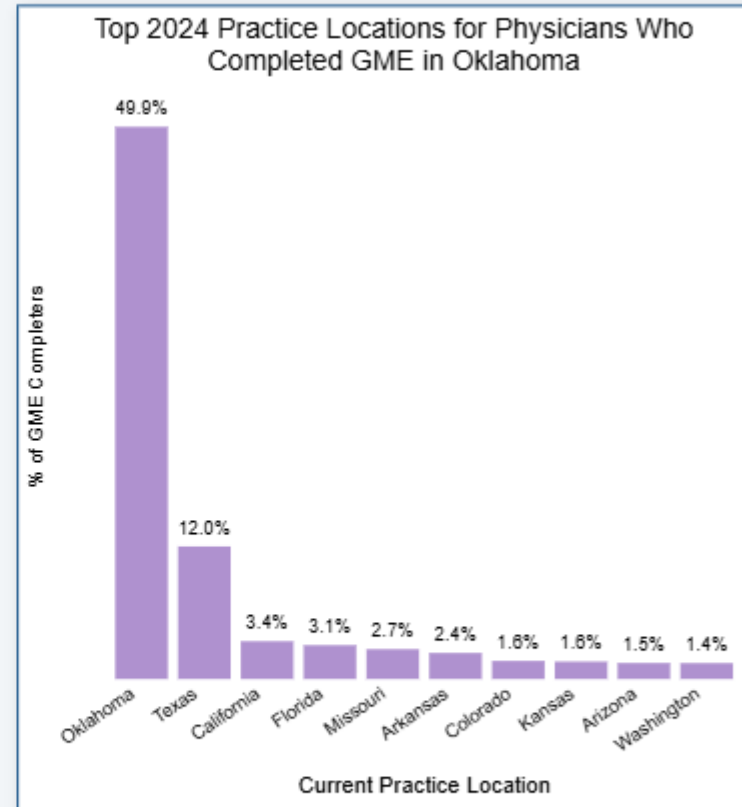
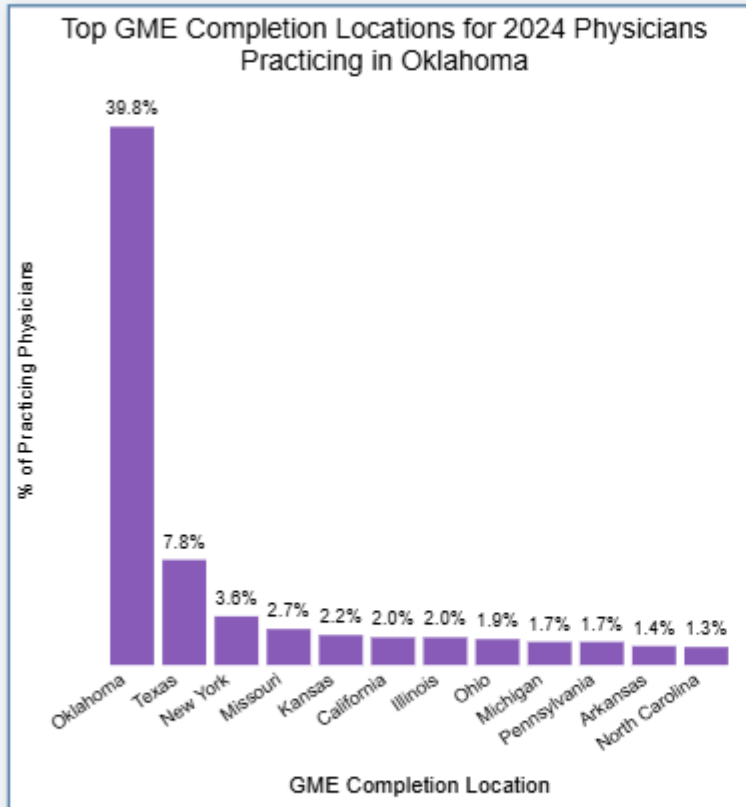
You need more GME

You need more GME
across specialties

You need retention, too

The relationship between where GME happens and where physicians work

Physician Practice and Graduate Medical Education (GME) Completion Locations



*** Denotes values that have been masked due to small cell sizes. Source: AHA Physician Professional Data, AAMC GME Track Data.

© 2025 AAMC. May be reproduced and distributed with attribution for educational and noncommercial purposes only. Created by Rosalie Cariberg, Senior Research and Data Analyst.

Layers to the relationship between where physicians train and where they work

Physician Retention by State or Territory and Training, 2024

Training Type	Graduate Medical Education		Medical School		Medical School & Graduate Medical Education		Public Medical School	
State or Territory	Retention %	Rank	Retention %	Rank	Retention %	Rank	Retention %	Rank
▲ Oklahoma	49.9%	12	48.2%	9	75.5%	8	49.5%	11

Outline



1

Physician shortage

2

Geographic distribution

3

Underlying causes of shortage

4

Understanding retention

5

Conclusion

Conclusion

Extra production will help

Strategic, homegrown production will help the most

Outline



1

Physician shortage

2

Geographic distribution

3

Underlying causes of shortage

4

Understanding retention

5

Conclusion