



*****PRESS RELEASE*****

New Report Signals Looming Shortage of 18,000 Doctors; Hospital Alliance Calls for State to Invest \$38 Million to Train More Docs

[December 15, 2021] New research supported by the Safety Net Hospital Alliance of Florida and the Florida Hospital Association, and conducted by IHS Markit, is sounding the alarm on a growing physician shortage fueled by rapid population growth alongside a steep cliff of physician retirements. The report states that if current trends continue, the projected shortfall in Florida would amount to 17,924 physicians by 2035. This shortage would mean patient access to primary and specialty physicians would only be sufficient to meet the needs of three fourths of the state's population by 2035. ([FL Physician Shortfall Report.](#))

The warning bells on Florida's physician shortage join a chorus of other alarms sounded earlier in the year, including news of a 59,100-nursing shortage in the state by 2035 and reports of 425,000 in staffing losses at residential care facilities since September 2020.

\$38 Million Additional State Investment Will Meet Projected Doc Shortage

Safety Net Hospital Alliance of Florida CEO Justin Senior announced that the organization plans to request that the State Legislature increase training slots in the Statewide Medicaid GME Residency Program by increasing program funding by \$38 million. Senior said this is the best way to keep the state's rapidly growing population healthy (which includes a 74% increase in people aged 65 to 74 by 2035).

Senior said, "Protecting the health of Floridians requires great access to primary and specialty physicians. The future of Florida's healthcare system is threatened by a doctor shortage due to the one-two punch of Florida's growing population and a wave of older physicians retiring from practice. We are requesting that the state invest an additional \$38 million in general revenue into the GME program. This would generate a total of \$95 million for the GME program when matched with federal funding. This is a win-win for Florida because we leverage more federal funds with the additional state investment, while also safeguarding Florida patients' access to quality healthcare for years to come."

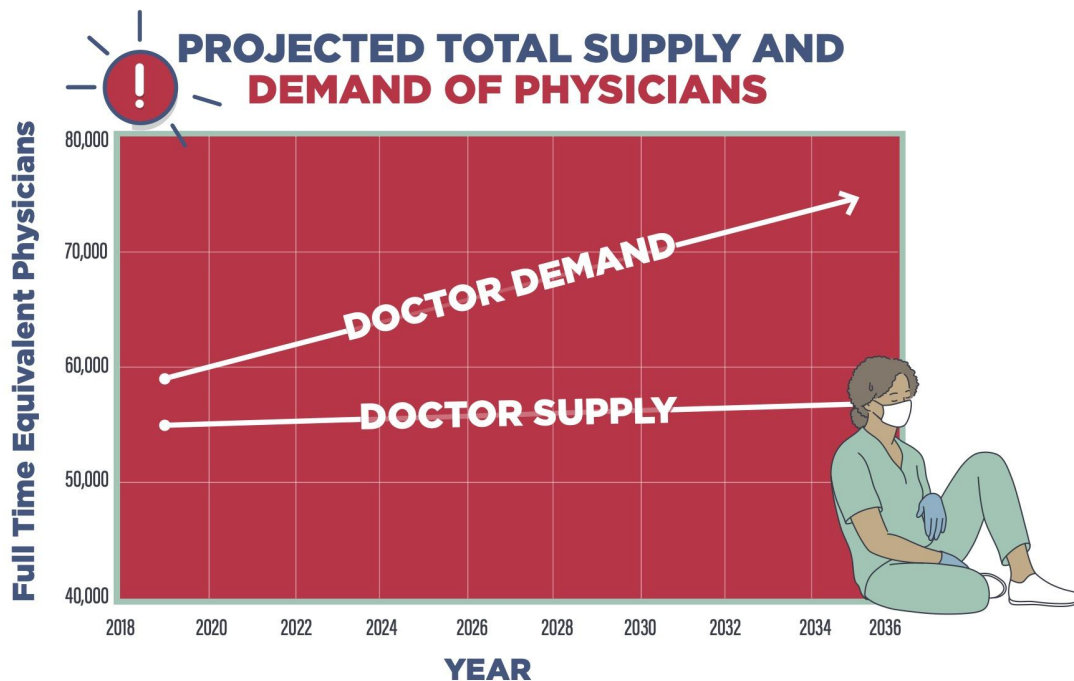


Florida Hospital Association President and CEO Mary Mayhew said, “Timely access to physician services is critical to a vibrant healthcare delivery system that can meet Floridians’ ever-increasing healthcare needs. To serve Florida’s growing population, we must proactively build and retain a physician workforce in Florida by ensuring that we have educational and training programs with the capacity to produce the projected number of physicians in the next decade. Research shows that physicians are most likely to practice medicine where they complete their residency, which is why it is so critical to invest in quality residency programs throughout our state.”

Since Florida launched the state Medicaid GME Residency program, physician teaching slots have grown from 3,562 to 6,432. Building on this strong return on investment, Senior recommends that the state double the current state general investment of \$38 million in hopes of incentivizing the addition of another three to six thousand doctor training slots in the state, which would compound over time as residents graduate and new residents begin their training and eventually meet the anticipated shortfall.

New Data Predicts Nearly 18,000 Florida Physician Shortage by 2035

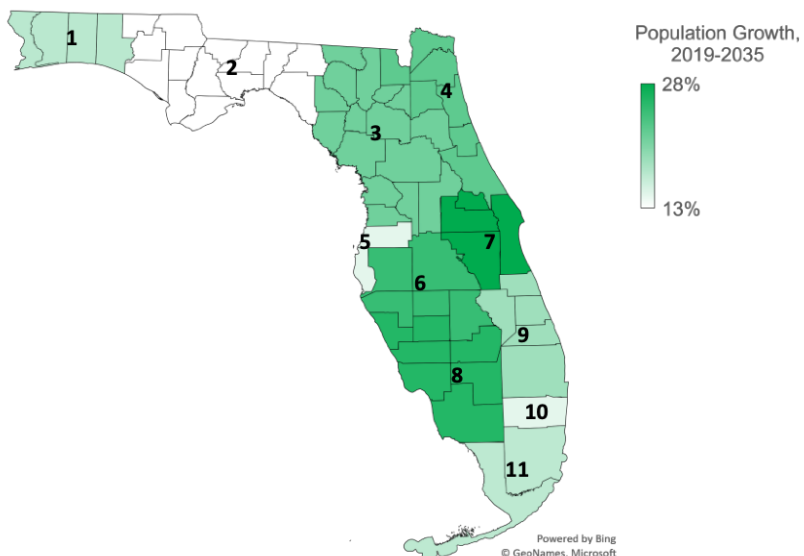
Projections estimate 36,368 docs leaving due to retirement/ outmigration





Florida's Population in 2019 was 21.2 Million; Will Surpass 25.4 Million by 2035

Projected Florida 2019-2035 Population Growth, by Medicaid Region



Dean John Fogarty, Chair, Council of Florida Medical School Deans said "In response to the rapid growth of the Florida population in the past 20 years, medical schools in Florida have increased in number from 4 to 10. As these schools have produced more physicians, they have also focused on developing new residency programs to retain more of their graduates in the state and contribute to the workforce caring for this population surge. Present analysis suggests that Florida still faces a looming shortage of both primary and specialty care physicians and we are committed to working with our partners in the state to address the need."

"While Florida is now educating the largest number of medical students in its history, these potential gains will be lost if we do not create sufficient numbers of residency training slots to incentivize these students to remain in our state. In order to ensure our medical school graduates stay here for training and continue to practice in Florida, we need to increase the amount of state funding allocated for graduate medical education. We also need to explore other options that would motivate physicians to relocate to Florida and especially to practice in underserved areas," said **Florida Medical Association President Doug Murphy, MD.**



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Florida Health Care Association Chief Executive Officer Emmett Reed responded to the report with the following, “The report comes as no surprise, given the worsening labor crisis being experienced in the health care sector, including among our member nursing centers and assisted living communities. Amid the COVID-19 pandemic, our state's long term care facilities are struggling to fill critical roles because there aren't enough workers to meet the demand of a growing elderly population. A strong workforce is a critical component in the overall quality of care that our state's seniors receive in long term care facilities. We look to work with the Florida Legislature on solutions that will help recruit and retain the best caregivers to meet the needs of those residents who are entrusted to our care.”

Justin Senior is the CEO of the Safety Net Hospital Alliance of Florida, which represents: Ascension Florida & Sacred Heart, Broward Health, Halifax Health, Jackson Health System, Johns Hopkins All Children’s Hospital, Lee Health, Memorial Healthcare System, Mount Sinai Medical Center, Nicklaus Children’s Hospital, Orlando Health, Sarasota Memorial Health Care System, Tampa General, UF Health Jacksonville and UF Health Shands

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