

South Carolina Physician Shortage Facts

THE PROBLEM

Physician supply lags patient demand nationally and across South Carolina. As supply falls, patients wait longer to see a doctor, and doctors burn out.



The U.S. is projected to have **120,000 too few** doctors nationally.

- ▶ Nearly 40% of American physicians will reach retirement age by 2030.¹
- ▶ By 2030, the United States will face a shortage of over 120,000 physicians.²



South Carolina is projected to be **short 3,230** doctors by 2030.

- ▶ Primary care alone is projected to be **short 815 providers**.³

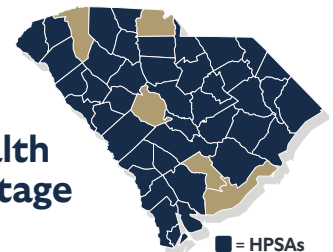
South Carolina ranks in the **bottom half** of states in the country in the availability of primary care doctors and general surgeons and for physician supply overall.⁴

36th in total physician supply

38th in active primary physicians

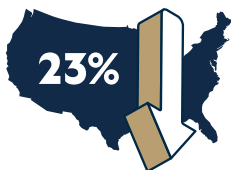
38th in general surgeons

41 of South Carolina's 46 counties are health professional shortage areas (HPSAs).⁵



- ▶ **Low-income citizens** are disproportionately affected by these shortages.
- ▶ HPSA designations indicate areas where there are **3,500 or more patients for every one provider**.⁶

South Carolina's physician to patient ratio is **23 percent worse** than the national average.



59% worse for infectious disease medicine

68% worse in pediatric critical care medicine

28% worse in preventive medicine

33% worse in psychiatry

1. Goldman, Deborah. "The Forgotten Physician." National Affairs, 2019. <https://nationalaffairs.com/publications/detail/the-forgotten-physician>.
 2. Zhang, Xiaoming, Daniel W. Lin, Hugh Pforsich, and Vernon W. Lin. "Physician Workforce in the United States of America: Forecasting Nationwide Shortages." Human Resources for Health, February 6, 2020. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12960-020-0448-3>.
 3. The Robert Graham Center. "South Carolina: Projecting Primary Care Physician Workforce." Policy Studies in Family Medicine and Primary Care. Accessed January 25, 2024. <https://www.graham-center.org/content/dam/rgc/documents/maps-data-tools/state-collections/workforce-projections/South%20Carolina.pdf>.
 4. AAMC. "South Carolina Physician Workforce Profile." Association of American Medical Colleges, 2021. <https://www.aamc.org/media/58321/download>.
 5. SCDHEC. "South Carolina Primary Care Health Professional Shortage Areas (HPSA)." South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control, September 29, 2021. https://scdhec.gov/sites/default/files/media/document/HPSA_Primary_Care2021.pdf.
 6. KFF. "Primary Care Health Professional Shortage Areas (HPSAs) | KFF." November 1, 2023. <https://www.kff.org/other/state-indicator/primary-care-health-professional-shortage-areas-hpsas/?currentTimeframe=0&sortModel=%7B%22colId%22:%22Practitioners%20Needed%20to%20Remove%20HPSA%20Designation%22,%22sort%22:%22desc%22%7D>.