Georgia State Office of Rural Health

The programs managed by the SORH include:
• Primary Care Office
• Hospital Services Program
• Networks for Rural Health
• Health Care for the Homeless
• Erlanger Air Ambulance Program for NW Georgia
• Breast Cancer Tag Program (screening, treatment)
• Statewide Area Health Education Centers Network
Georgia State Office of Rural Health

Georgians served:
- 157 counties participate in SORH programs representing 8,116,332 Georgians
- 145 counties participate in three or more programs representing 7,609,559 Georgians

State Office of Rural Health & Primary Care Office

Health Professional Shortage Areas (HPSA)

- Primary Care (HPSA): 127
- Dental (DHPSA): 99
- Mental (MHPSA): 127
Primary Care Health Professional Shortage

Obstacles facing the expansion of Primary Care

• Lack of an adequate supply of primary care physicians
• Difficult to manage a sustainable practice
  – Communities with poor demographics and low payer sources
  – Patients whose health is poor, difficult to manage
• Communities often lack community resources to attract the provider and their families
Solutions – Physician Assistants & Nurse Practitioners

• Rural Health Clinics
• Federally Qualified Health Centers
  – Family Nurse Practitioners (FNP)
    • There are currently 5711 licensed FNPs in GA according to the Georgia Nursing Board
  – Physician Assistants (PA)
    • There are ~2000 licensed PAs licensed in GA according to the Georgia Association of Physician Assistants
• Private Providers

Rural Health Clinics & Federally Qualified Health Centers

• Rural Health Clinics (RHC) and Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHC) are encouraged to staff with FNP and/or PA providers.
• RHCs must employee a PA or FNP to provide direct patient care over 50% of the time
• FQHCs do not have a mandatory staffing requirement for designation, but recognize the value and most utilize
Family Nurse Practitioners

• Family Nurse Practitioner Requirements:
  – All states require a RN license & some form of advanced training beyond undergraduate RN training
  – 27 states require a masters degree in nursing
  – 35 states require national certification
  – 27 states require physician for treatment, diagnose, prescribe
  – 9 states require physician to prescribe, but FNP may diagnose, treat
  – 15 states allow independent practice

Physician Assistants

• Physician Assistant (PA) Requirements:
  – All states require a pre-med curriculum & advanced training beyond undergraduate
  – 27 months is the avg PA program beyond the ~2yrs+/+ pre-med curriculum; plus over 2000 hours of clinical rotations
  – National certification
  – All 50 states allow a PA to diagnose, treat, & prescribe medication
  – 40 states have varying degrees of dispensing medications
Family Nurse Practitioners & Physician Assistants

Why hire an FNP or PA?
- Increase medical provider staff
- Increase your time
  - More time for patients, research for complicated issues, more time for practice management
  - Increase time away from practice for family and social activities
  - Less call
- Opportunity to accommodate patients – greater satisfaction & patient compliance
  - More appointment availability
  - Allows more quality time with patients and patient interaction
- Increase revenue
  - Contributes greatly to the practice sustainability

Contact Information

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