

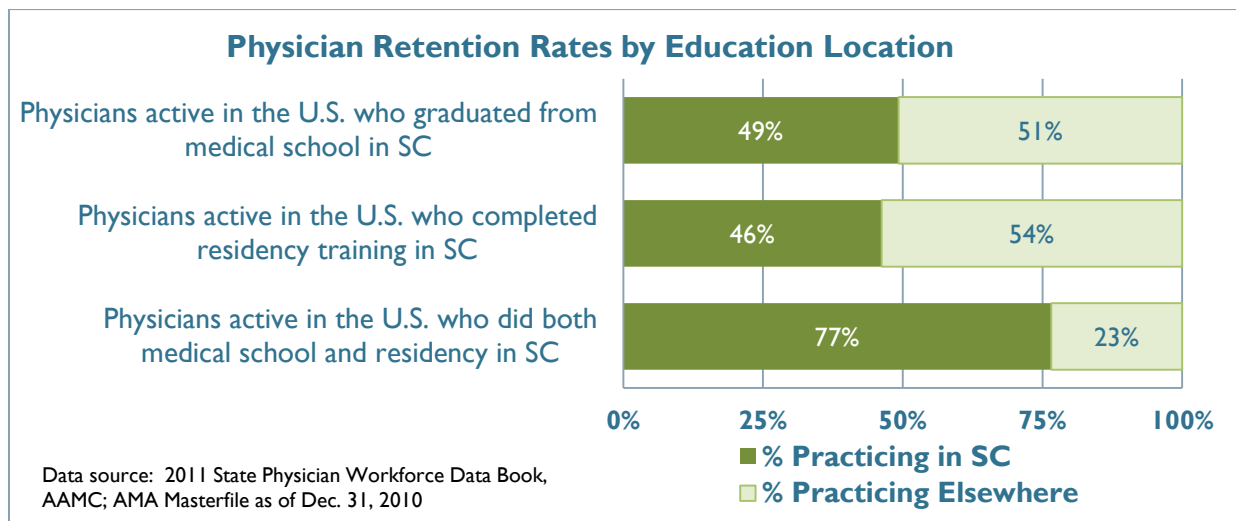


**DATA BRIEF • September 2013**

## *Retaining Physicians Educated in South Carolina*

Medical education is expensive for both the students and the states that support physician education in public universities and clinical training sites. Understanding the factors that influence where physicians decide to practice can help states maximize the return on their investment in this important public health resource. Physicians educated in the United States have the luxury of being able to practice anywhere in the country they choose, yet policies affecting student admissions and residency training opportunities can be influential.

Information published by the Association of American Medical Colleges, based on data maintained by the American Medical Association, suggests that where physicians attend medical school and complete their residency training are both influential factors in where physicians ultimately decide to practice. Other research has found that having ties to a community prior to entering medical school is also a good predictor of physician practice location.



In the 2010-2011 academic year, a total of 239 South Carolinians entered medical school somewhere in the United States; 88% of them enrolled in a South Carolina program, earning the state the second highest in-state matriculation rate in the country that year. Across all U.S. as a whole, 63% of first-year students attending allopathic (MD) medical programs matriculated in their home state.

South Carolina also does better than many states in retaining physicians who complete their medical education and/or their residency training in the state. The table and chart included here report the numbers and percentages respectively. The average retention rate across the United States for keeping physicians who attended

medical school in state is 39%, based on the 2010 active physician workforce as measured by the American Medical Association. In South Carolina, the retention rate for medical school graduates is 49% based on that same measure of the 2010 physician workforce.

After completing training in an ACGME-accredited residency training program, 48% of U.S. physicians stayed or returned to the state of their most recent residency training experience. South Carolina was similar to the national average on this measure, retaining 46% of those who complete graduate medical education (GME) here.

Physician Education and Practice Location			
Of all of the physicians in active practice in the United States in 2010:	Total #	# Practicing in South Carolina	Retention %
# who attended medical school in SC	6,456	3,179	49.2%
# who did their residency training in SC	7,343	3,393	46.2%
# who did both medical school and residency training in SC	2,389	1,829	76.6%

When both medical school location and residency training location are considered, retention rates rise. Nationally, about 66% of physicians who attended both medical school and graduate residency training in the same state stayed in that state to practice. In South Carolina the retention rate is 77% when both factors are present. Based on the 2010 physician workforce, as measured by the American Medical Association, South Carolina ranked 9<sup>th</sup> in the country for retaining physicians who attend medical school here and complete their residency training here as well.

The number of physicians able to complete both their medical education and their residency training within South Carolina is relatively small, compared to the number that have completed either medical school or residency training here. In the next few years the number of students graduating from a medical school in South Carolina will increase by almost 100% with the addition of two new schools of medicine: USC-Greenville and the Edward Via College of Osteopathic Medicine in Spartanburg. Both schools now have students enrolled. The number of graduate-level residency programs is unlikely to increase at all during the next few years, and certainly not enough to accommodate the large increase in medical school graduates. As a consequence, more of the students educated here will have to go elsewhere for their residency training and our retention rates are likely to decrease in the future.

*Note: The original data source (cited below) uses the term Undergraduate Medical Education (UME) to refer to the medical school portion of physician education and the term Graduate Medical Education (GME) to refer to the residency training portion. We have used the terms "medical school" and "residency training" which are a bit easier to understand for a general audience not familiar with the different levels of physician education.*

*Data Source: 2011 State Physician Workforce Data Book, Center for Workforce Studies, Association of American Medical Colleges, published November, 2011. Physician counts are from the American Medical Association Masterfile as of December 31, 2010.*