In 2003:

- Twenty-three counties gained providers, eleven counties lost providers and sixty-six counties experienced no change.
- Ten counties had no optometrists; eight of these have had none since 1993.
- Wake (+11) and Mecklenburg (+9) experienced the largest gains and together account for more than one-fifth (21.1%) of all optometrists in the state (187 out of 885).

Did you know ...
In 2003 there was a 4.6% (+39) increase in the optometrist workforce which continues a trend of growth since 1993, with the exception of 2000 which showed a slight decline in numbers (-1, 0.1%).

Optometrists per 10,000 Population

- White: 96%
- Black: 1%
- American Indian: < 0.5%
- Asian: 1%
- Hispanic: < 0.5%
- Other: < 0.5%

In 2003, there were 885 licensed, active, in-state optometrists in North Carolina.

GENDER
In North Carolina the optometry profession is 73% male and 27% female.

Metropolitan/Non-Metropolitan Counties
In 2003 there were 1.6 optometrists per 10,000 population in metropolitan counties and 1.0 optometrist per 10,000 population in non-metropolitan counties.

Age distribution of optometrists in NC, 2003

- 10.4% <31
- 29.3% 31-40
- 33.7% 41-50
- 16.5% 51-60
- 5.3% 61-70
- 4.9% >70

The majority of optometrists (79%) work in a practice office with an additional 12% employed in non-federal clinics. The employment setting is unknown for 7% of NC optometrists and the remaining 2% work in various settings such as group health, hospitals, educational institutions, VA, public health and industrial health.

**Optometrists per 10,000 Population**

In 2003, there were 1.04 optometrists per 10,000 population in North Carolina. In 2000, the last year that national figures are available, there were 1.17 optometrists per 10,000 population for the United States.

**Specialty**

- General practice: 86%
- Contact lenses: 4%
- Developmental vision: 1%
- Other: 1%
- Unknown/None: 8%

**Optometrists per 10,000 Population by Persistent Health Professional Shortage Areas, NC, 1979-2003**

Persistent HPSAs are those designated as HPSAs by HRSA from 1993 through 1997, or in 6 of the last 7 releases of HPSA definitions.