

The North Carolina Health Professions Data System (HPDS) is housed at the Cecil G. Sheps Center for Health Services Research at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, and operates with funding from the North Carolina Area Health Education Centers (AHEC) Program and the UNC Office of the Provost (Health Affairs). The HPDS maintains annual licensure files for 19 health professions and has continuous data for most of these professions dating back to 1979. Annual licensure data include demographic (e.g., name, date and place of birth, race/ethnicity, and gender), educational (e.g. professional degree and graduation year) and professional characteristics (e.g. employment address, specialty, type of position, employment setting, and activity status).

The NC HPDS assists a great number of people and organizations including North Carolina state agencies, Federal offices, non-profit groups, media, individuals, and even other states. Inquiries include requests for basic information, mailing lists, aggregate statistics, analysis files and other special requests. For more information on what we do, or to learn more about requesting health workforce data, please visit our website at <http://www.shepscenter.unc.edu/hp> or call the data coordinator at (919) 966-7112.

What people are saying about about the HPDS:

*"I deeply appreciate the information so very much. I know I will be asking for more. Thanks and best wishes."*  
-Member, North Carolina House of Representatives

*"Your organization is a wonderful resource. I cannot thank you enough. This looks like what I was hoping for. Many, many thanks!"*  
-A Community Free Clinic in North Carolina

*"This is extraordinarily helpful data for those of us in the business of educating students to meet impending workforce shortages. Thanks for the fine work you do, and for including my college in mailings such as this one. It is very difficult to stay ahead of the workforce curve - particularly in allied health fields. Your work makes a difference."*  
-Carolinas College of Health Sciences

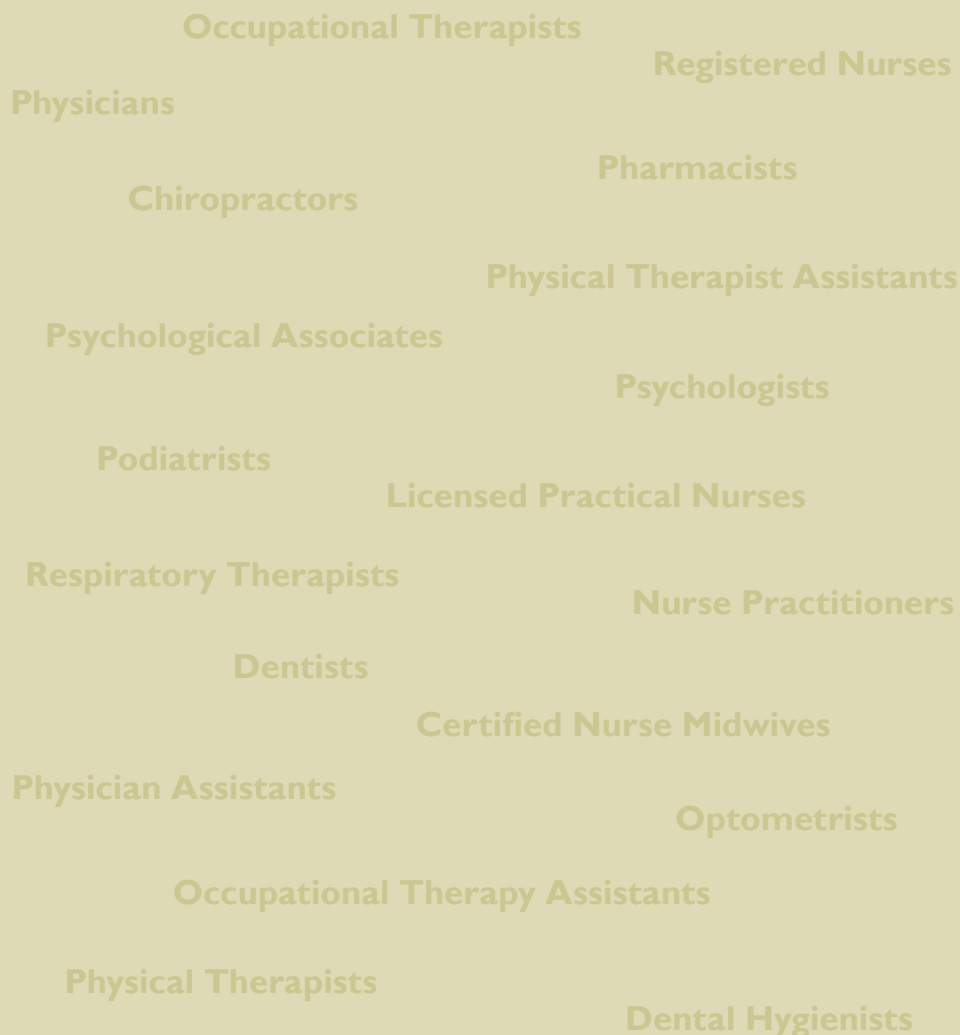
*"We can always count on the folks at the Sheps Center."*  
-Council for Allied Health in North Carolina

*"Many thanks for the quick and thorough response. You all are so terrific to work with."*  
-North Carolina AHEC Program

*"Thanks for all the good work. We are envious of all the information and excellent presentation. We struggle here with the basics and often show your materials as examples on how we could do better. If no one else tells you what a great job you are doing we will and we send our thanks (from the NM SORH) to all."*  
-New Mexico Primary Care Planning/Rural Health Programs



**UNC**  
THE CECIL G. SHEPS CENTER  
FOR HEALTH SERVICES RESEARCH



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# The North Carolina Health Professions Data System

The HPDS handles hundreds of requests for health workforce data from the legislature, policy makers, educators, the press and others annually, as well as producing annual and special topic reports that serve three functions.



Professions include:

- certified nurse midwives
- chiropractors
- dental hygienists
- dentists
- licensed practical nurses
- nurse practitioners
- occupational therapists
- occupational therapy assistants
- optometrists
- pharmacists
- physical therapists
- physical therapist assistants
- physician assistants
- physicians (MDs and DOs)
- physicians in residency training
- podiatrists
- practicing psychologists
- psychological associates
- registered nurses
- respiratory therapists

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# Identifying Emerging Issues

## Allied Health Workforce and Economic Development

**Emerging Issue:** News of dentist, nurse, physician and pharmacist shortages have dominated the headlines but the need to assess the supply of the allied health workers has emerged as an increasingly important issue.

**Addressing the Challenge:** With funding from the Council for Allied Health in North Carolina, the HPDS began the Allied Health Job Vacancy Tracking Project. Vacancies are tracked through newspaper and online advertisements. Analyses have been used to identify professions facing shortages as well as to note differences in the demand for allied health professions across the state's nine AHEC regions.

**Identifying Policy Implications:** This research has drawn the attention of state policy makers who are looking for ways to address manufacturing, textile and furniture job losses in North Carolina. Allied health jobs represent an increasingly important employment sector in the state and an engine for economic growth.

Total State, Health Care and Allied Health Employment, North Carolina, 1999-2005

	1999	2005	% Growth (1999-2005)
Total NC Employment	3,801,670	3,809,690	0.2%
Health Care Jobs	251,550	302,270	20.2%
Allied Health Jobs	76,590	111,630	45.8%

Source: NC HPDS with data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics. Occupational Employment Statistics. State Cross-Industry Estimates: 1999-2005. URL: <http://www.bls.gov/oes/>. Accessed 06/28/2006.

**Fostering Collaboration:** Recognizing the growth potential of allied health employment, state policy makers from the Governor's Office, Legislature, Departments of Health and Human Services and Commerce are collaborating with HPDS staff, community college and university systems, health care employers and industry to identify ways to transition unemployed workers into allied health jobs. The hope is that these efforts will reduce workforce shortages, increase access to health care services and improve the economic outlook in the state's neediest counties. Find the report and other publications at <http://www.shepscenter.unc.edu/hp/publications.htm>.

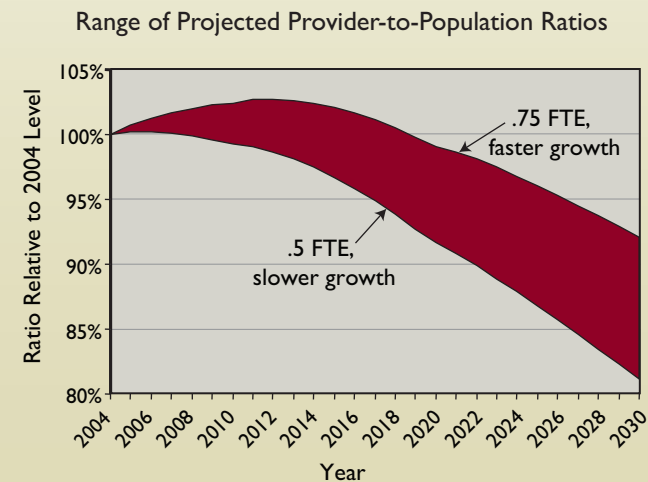
# Monitoring Trends

## Task Force on Primary Care and Specialty Supply in North Carolina

**Detected Trend:** Based on HPDS data from 2000 to 2004, researchers became concerned that the growth in physician supply relative to population that North Carolina had experienced in the past was coming to a halt.

**Action Taken:** The North Carolina Institute of Medicine convened a year-long task force to examine the state's physician supply and options to address the projected shortage. Researchers used HPDS data to predict the future supply of providers relative to the projected growth in North Carolina's population. Analyses include data on the supply and practice characteristics of:

- physicians
- physician assistants
- nurse practitioners
- certified nurse midwives



**Planning for the Future:** Analysts were able to "test" the effects that a variety of policy scenarios would have on provider supply. The results revealed that, if nothing changes, the state will face a decreased supply of providers in the near future. The task force published a report and the work was featured in a special issue of the *North Carolina Medical Journal*.

A copy of the report is available at: [http://www.nciom.org/docs/provider\\_supply\\_report.pdf](http://www.nciom.org/docs/provider_supply_report.pdf).

# Informing Policy Debates

## Trends in the Supply of Dentists in North Carolina

**Informing Policy Debates:** In 2006, policy makers in North Carolina began to discuss options to improve the supply and distribution of dentists in the state.

**Supplying the Facts:** Legislators, the educational system and the NC AHEC program requested that the HPDS provide an objective analysis of the supply and distribution of dentists in the state. Analyses found:

- NC ranks 47<sup>th</sup> in the nation in dentists per capita
- Only seven out of 100 counties in North Carolina meet or exceed the national average of dentists per capita
- Four counties, all in eastern North Carolina, have no dentist
- Thirty-three counties saw a decline in dentists per capita from 1996 to 2005.

**Policy Outcomes:** Findings were actively used by legislators in their discussions about developing a new dental school at East Carolina University and expanding the dental program at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. View the report at: [http://www.shepscenter.unc.edu/hp/nc\\_dentists05.pdf](http://www.shepscenter.unc.edu/hp/nc_dentists05.pdf).

