

# Kentucky Physician Shortage Facts

## THE PROBLEM

Physician supply lags patient demand nationally and across Kentucky. 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.<sup>1</sup>
- ▶ By 2030, the United States will face a shortage of over 120,000 physicians.<sup>2</sup>
- ▶ 32.3% of Kentucky physicians are within retirement range right now.<sup>3</sup>



Kentucky is projected to be **short 2,926 doctors** by 2030.

- ▶ Primary care alone is projected to be **short 624 providers**.<sup>4</sup>

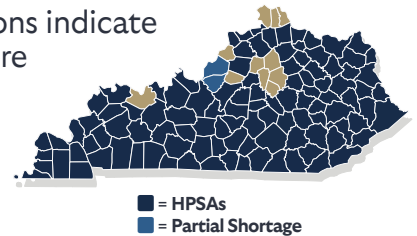
Kentucky ranks **in the bottom half** of all states for primary care doctor availability and overall physician supply.<sup>5</sup>

40<sup>th</sup> in total primary physicians

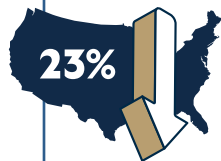
44<sup>th</sup> in active primary physicians

**107 of Kentucky's 120 counties** are health professional shortage areas (HPSAs).<sup>6</sup>

- ▶ 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**.<sup>7</sup>



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



**86% worse** for infectious disease medicine

**47% worse** in internal medicine

**36% worse** in pediatric critical care medicine

**40% worse** in preventive medicine

**45% worse** in psychiatry

1. Goldman, Devorah. "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. Center of Excellence in Rural Health. "Kentucky Physician Report." University of Kentucky College of Medicine, 2022. <https://medicine.uky.edu/sites/default/files/inline-files/2023%20KBML%20Update%20%282022%20Data%29.pdf>.
4. 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/Kentucky.pdf>.
5. AAMC. "South Carolina Physician Workforce Profile." Association of American Medical Colleges, 2021. <https://www.aamc.org/media/58321/download>.
6. "Map of Health Professional Shortage Areas: Primary Care, by County, 2023 - Rural Health Information Hub," n.d. <https://www.ruralhealthinfo.org/charts/5?state=KY>.
7. 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>.