

In the increasingly fragmented world of health care, one thing remains constant: family physicians are dedicated to treating the whole person. Family medicine's cornerstone is an ongoing, personal patient-physician relationship focusing on integrated care. Family physicians deliver a range of acute, chronic, and preventive medical care services while providing patients with a patient-centered medical home.

Methods & Results

A 2007 study by the Robert Graham Center for Policy Studies used economic data from the IMPLAN database to evaluate the annual economic impact of family physicians on a state-by-state basis. Using Medical Group Management Association data, **one full time family physician was estimated to create an average of five full-time supporting staff positions.** Using a linear input-output social accounting matrix, the direct, indirect, induced and total economic impacts of a family physician on their community were estimated.

In 2007, the economic impact of one family physician in the United States was \$904,696 on average, with sizable state to state variation. Multiplied by their total number nationally (according to the American Medical Association Masterfile), **family physicians generate a nationwide economic impact of \$46,183,968,060 per year.** This is a conservative estimate, and doesn't include a number of intangible and tangible economic benefits of FPs, such as their contribution to the generation of income for other local health care organizations such as hospitals and nursing homes.

Recommendations

In addition to the vast array of health care services they provide, family physicians are obviously significant generators of economic activity in local communities. They serve as employers, consumers of goods and services and even generators of income to other health care organizations. As *Table 1* demonstrates, family physicians can serve as economic engines for their state.

Family physicians contribute to the economic viability of the communities they serve. Therefore, states who chose to make an investment **in loan repayment, primary care residency training and tax incentives** for practice in underserved areas are not only providing health benefits to their residents, but will also see a return on investment for some of the most economically deprived areas of the state.

Table 1. Economic Impact of Family Physicians by State

State	Impact per Family Physician per Year	Total Impact per Year
US Average	\$904,696	\$46,183,968,060
Alabama	\$776,585	\$779,691,512
Alaska	\$682,597	\$168,601,563
Arizona	\$845,862	\$950,748,643
Arkansas	\$845,862	\$787,497,279
California	\$985,881	\$8,286,328,413
Colorado	\$892,177	\$1,142,878,408
Connecticut	\$1,090,818	\$527,955,975
Delaware	\$886,681	\$146,302,383
Dist. of Columbia	\$782,228	\$89,956,253
Florida	\$940,606	\$3,542,320,963
Georgia	\$1,028,774	\$1,674,844,376
Hawaii	\$801,960	\$236,578,326
Idaho	\$812,189	\$350,053,555
Illinois	\$1,049,198	\$2,908,376,996
Indiana	\$949,269	\$1,723,872,029
Iowa	\$931,341	\$837,275,159
Kansas	\$878,642	\$727,515,645
Kentucky	\$878,642	\$955,962,533
Louisiana	\$938,117	\$932,488,096
Maine	\$829,391	\$372,396,496
Maryland	\$884,592	\$914,668,659
Massachusetts	\$959,812	\$900,303,978
Michigan	\$907,296	\$1,790,095,645
Minnesota	\$1,041,982	\$2,204,834,326
Mississippi	\$1,259,838	\$818,894,845
Missouri	\$1,048,595	\$1,038,108,561
Montana	\$759,497	\$256,709,892
Nebraska	\$893,118	\$599,281,821
Nevada	\$959,118	\$401,870,278
New Hampshire	\$969,658	\$342,289,301
New Jersey	\$1,021,432	\$1,233,889,991
New Mexico	\$660,392	\$355,951,393
New York	\$1,036,179	\$2,928,242,253
North Carolina	\$964,271	\$2,023,039,748
North Dakota	\$737,560	\$199,878,798
Ohio	\$923,043	\$2,422,066,737
Oklahoma	\$892,189	\$702,153,484
Oregon	\$853,226	\$852,373,048
Pennsylvania	\$986,483	\$2,845,019,533
Rhode Island	\$757,605	\$122,732,035
South Carolina	\$908,512	\$1,038,429,374
South Dakota	\$920,053	\$270,495,624
Tennessee	\$1,164,224	\$1,725,380,596
Texas	\$1,114,843	\$5,370,200,197
Utah	\$716,449	\$376,851,933
Vermont	\$752,108	\$182,010,171
Virginia	\$931,989	\$1,804,332,507
Washington	\$818,353	\$1,811,014,242
West Virginia	\$764,244	\$393,585,486
Wisconsin	\$1,016,094	\$1,857,421,386
Wyoming	\$689,897	\$129,700,586

Source: Robert Graham Center for Policy Studies – www.graham-center.org