



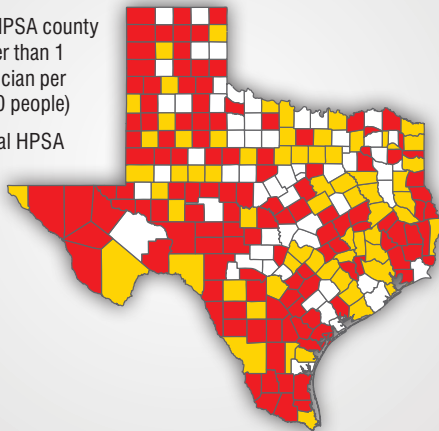
Primary Care Preceptorship Programs Work to Build the Physician Workforce Texas Needs

Texas continues to produce too few general internists, general pediatricians, and family physicians to meet the needs of its citizens, particularly those in rural and underserved areas. While study after study shows access to these physicians in a health system based on primary care produces higher levels of health for less cost, nearly

5.8 million Texans — almost 1 in 4 — live in primary care health professional shortage areas. With an estimated 4.2 million Texans soon to receive coverage under the new health care reform law, producing more primary care physicians must be among the state's top priorities.

HEALTH PROFESSIONAL SHORTAGE AREAS *129 counties in Texas are classified as full HPSAs*

- Full HPSA county (fewer than 1 physician per 3,500 people)
- Partial HPSA



Efficient and effective health care systems maintain an optimal physician workforce balance of 50% primary care — defined as general internal medicine, family medicine, and general pediatrics — and 50% specialty care. In America, only 35% of physicians practice primary care, and considering the decline in medical student interest in primary care specialties, that ratio is likely to get worse.

- The Council on Graduate Medical Education recently reported that fewer than 20% of U.S. medical school graduates plan to enter primary care.
- A 2008 JAMA study showed that only 2% of medical students intended to practice general internal medicine, 4.9% planned to practice family medicine, and 11.7% planned to practice general pediatrics.

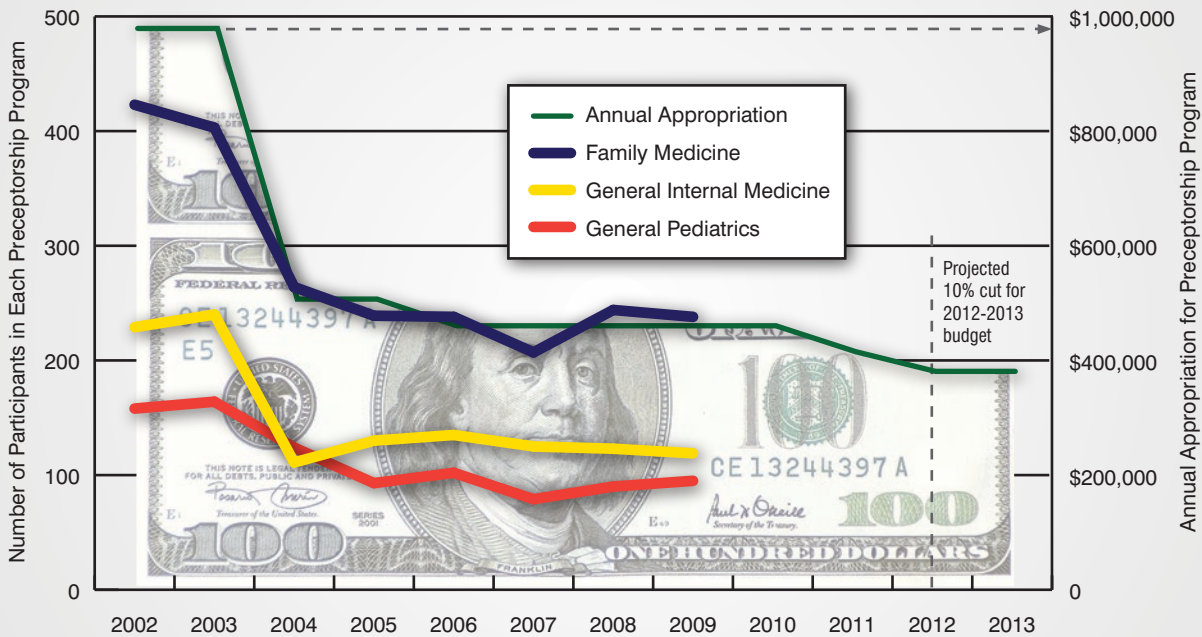
Early Exposure to Primary Care Practice Makes the Difference

In the '80s and '90s, the Texas Legislature recognized the need to support the state's primary care workforce by providing medical students opportunities to experience the joy and fulfillment of practicing primary care in a broad range of settings. Among the most successful of these initiatives are the three statewide preceptorship programs, the **General Internal Medicine Statewide Preceptorship Program**, the **Texas Statewide Family Medicine Preceptorship Program**, and the **General Pediatric Preceptorship Program**, all of which are funded through the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board. Combined, these programs have placed more than 6,000 medical students in primary care clinics for 4-week internships since 1995, with remarkable results.

- A comprehensive study covering nine years of Texas medical school graduates showed that students who participated in a family medicine preceptorship were almost twice as likely to pursue a career in family medicine as those who didn't complete a preceptorship.
- Of the 238 medical students who completed family medicine preceptorships in 2009, 93% said the experience made them more receptive to primary care as a career.
- From 1999 to 2006, more than 1,400 medical students completed a general internal medicine preceptorship, and 40.6% of them enrolled in an internal medicine residency program, 26.4% of them intended to practice primary care, and 82% of them intended to stay in Texas.
- From 1999 to 2009, almost 1,400 medical students completed a pediatric preceptorship. 37% of them entered a pediatric residency, and 62% stayed in Texas.

PARTICIPATION AND FUNDING FOR TEXAS' PRIMARY CARE PRECEPTORSHIP PROGRAMS

Since 2003, funding has been cut by 53.4%, and total participation has dropped by 44.2%



A Small Investment in Primary Care Preceptorships Will Pay Huge Dividends

Studies of the preceptorship programs in Texas and similar programs in other states indicate that early primary care clinical curricular experience like that provided by the Texas statewide preceptorship programs is an effective method of increasing the number of primary care physicians and expanding access to primary care in underserved populations. However, a series of funding cuts to these programs since 2003 have seriously eroded their capacity and therefore reduced the number of primary care physicians the state can produce.

- In 2003, the Legislature cut the funding for preceptorships in half, from almost \$2 million per biennium to less than \$1 million for the 2004-2005 biennium.
- Funding was cut by 10% for the 2008-2009 biennium, and then another 5% in the current biennium.
- In the House base budget for 2012-2013, the program has been eliminated. The Senate budget allows only \$322,153 per year — less than 33% of the preceptorship program's budget in 2002-2003 — for a program that is proven to increase Texas' primary care physician workforce.

Last year, 260 medical students applied to participate in the General Internal Medicine Statewide Preceptorship Program, but funding only allowed for 89 of them to be accepted. 143 students asked to be matched with a family medicine preceptor, but only 117 could be placed. If this latest reduction is passed in the next budget, 85 fewer preceptorship positions will be offered, further deteriorating our state's ability to produce the next generation of primary care physicians.

- ▶ *The Texas Primary Care Coalition respectfully requests that the Texas Legislature restore funding for the Texas Primary Care Preceptorship Programs to 2002-2003 levels.*

\$1 million a year is a tiny fraction of the state budget, but it could make a tremendous difference to the foundation of the state's health care delivery system.