A Moveable Profession: Where Physicians Move and Why

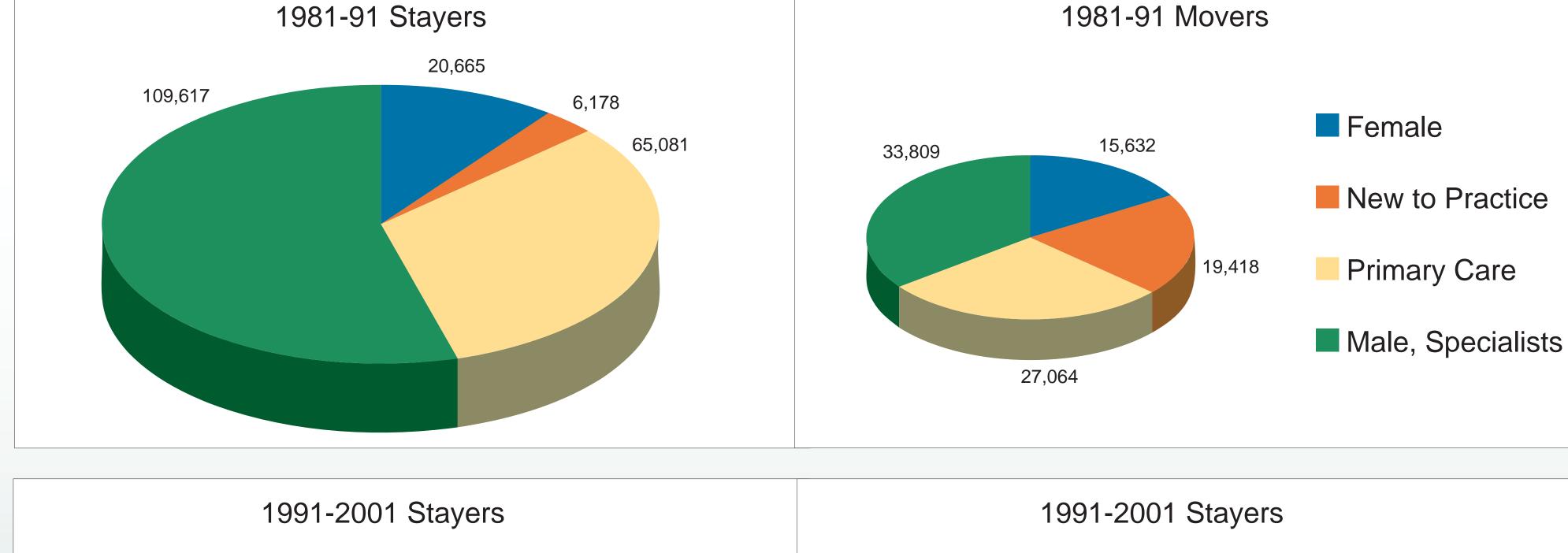
Objectives: to describe how physicians move from place to place during their practice lives and to determine whether those moves are influenced by local supply factors in the places from which and to which they move.

Design: The project matched records of individual physicians for each of the years and tracked physician movement between counties classified according to physicianpopulation ratio and socioeconomic characteristics. Individual physician locations were tracked for two ten-year intervals 1981-1991 adn 1991-2001. Multivariable logistic regression models predicting the correlates of whether a physician moved were estimated.

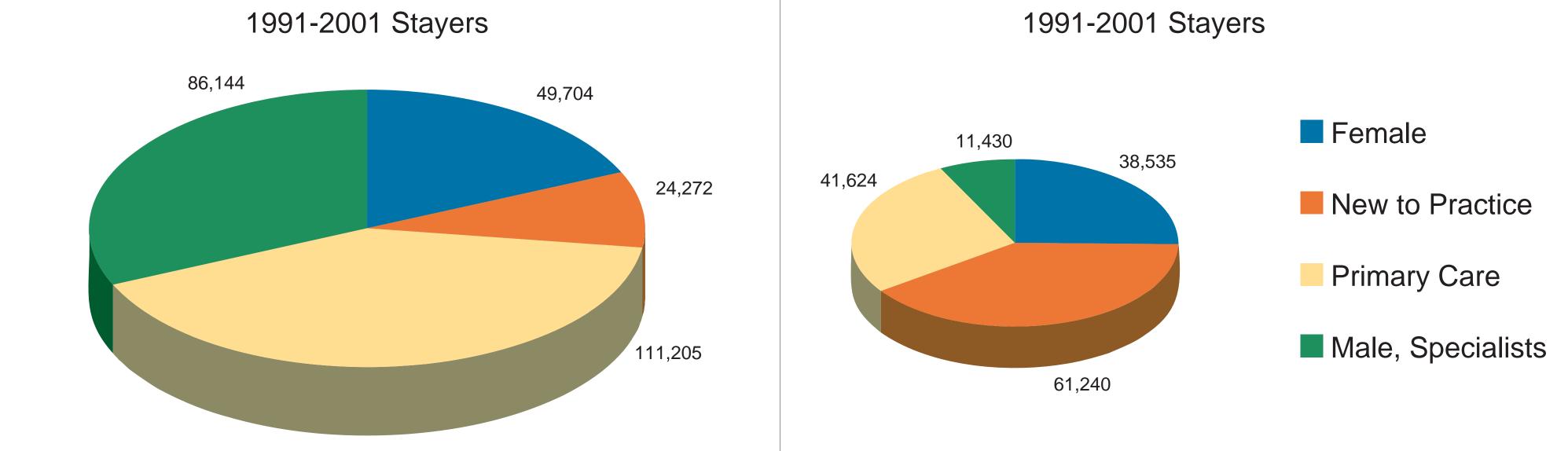
Setting and Participants: This study focuses on all active physicians practicing in the United States between 1981 and 2001.

Main Outcome Measures: The outcomes were measured by the move of a physician into another location where that physician continued the practice of medicine.

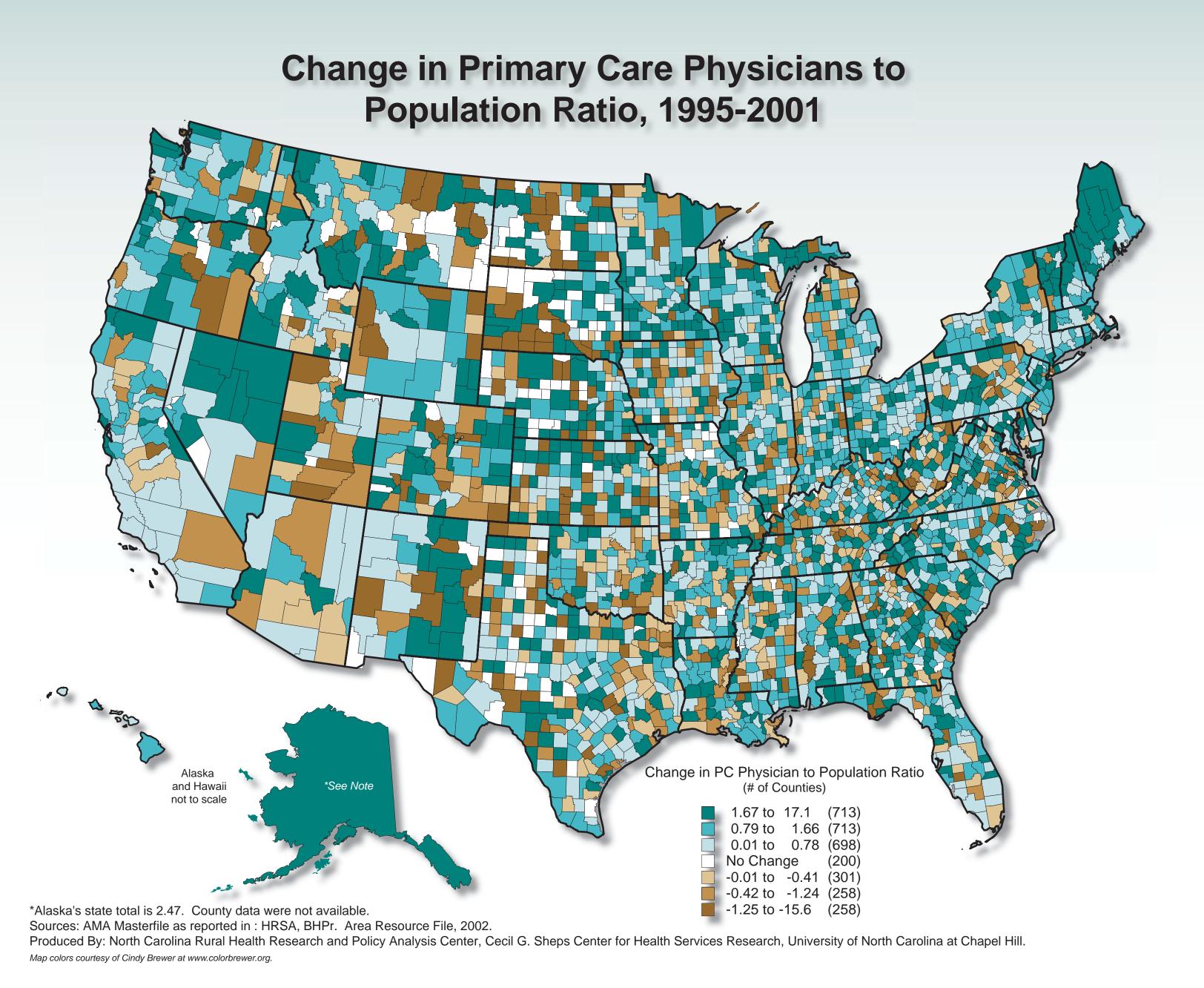




424,154 Physicians Active in 1991 and 2001 --36% Moved



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Regression Results: Community Characteristics of Departure and Destination Counties

(Bold Face, Italic* indicates Change of Sign Between the From and To Regression Models, with the Values Significant in Both Models at p=.01)

| | 1981 | -1991 | 1991 | -2002 | |
|--------------------------|-----------|-------------|-----------|-------------|--|
| Variables | departure | destination | departure | destination | |
| Female | 1.189 | 1.359 | 1.074 | 1.187 | |
| Age | 0.903 | 0.900 | 0.907 | 0.901 | |
| Prim Care | 0.974 | 0.750 | 0.990 | 0.733 | |
| Population | 1.000 | 1.000 | 1.000 | 1.000 | |
| Ratio | 1.053* | 0.955* | 1.010 | 0.991* | |
| % HiSchGrads | 1.000 | 0.998 | 0.998 | 0.999 | |
| Unempl% | 1.005* | 0.998* | 1.024* | 0.985* | |
| Nonwhite | 1.011* | 0.996* | 1.013* | 0.996* | |
| Income | 0.956* | 1.014* | 0.986* | 1.005* | |
| Hosp | 0.984* | 1.006* | 0.964 | 0.993 | |
| Model pseudo R-square | 0.141 | 0.147 | 0.147 | 0.139 | |

| | 1991 | | | | | | | | | | | |
|----------|---------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|---------|
| | 2001 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | total |
| | Low 1 | 2,809 | 2,145 | 1,979 | 1,874 | 1,202 | 2,741 | 1,252 | 2,273 | 1,414 | 1,386 | 19,076 |
| 3 | 2 | 1,946 | 1,627 | 1,646 | 1,894 | 1,601 | 2,305 | 1,178 | 2,149 | 1,688 | 1,829 | 17,865 |
| | 3 | 1,432 | 1,582 | 1,373 | 2,082 | 1,352 | 2,218 | 1,358 | 1,897 | 1,775 | 2,237 | 17,309 |
| | 4 | 923 | 1,181 | 844 | 1,553 | 1,337 | 1,632 | 1,026 | 1,668 | 1,512 | 1,714 | 13,394 |
| , , | 5 | 1,101 | 1,048 | 929 | 1,353 | 1,743 | 1,926 | 903 | 1,566 | 1,902 | 1,616 | 14,092 |
| 2 | 6 | 1,142 | 1,071 | 1,180 | 1,391 | 929 | 2,055 | 1,037 | 1,773 | 1,976 | 2,165 | 14,725 |
| <i>-</i> | 7 | 1,055 | 795 | 943 | 1,221 | 897 | 1,696 | 1,013 | 1,467 | 1,353 | 2,150 | 12,597 |
| Ť | 8 | 1,162 | 1,026 | 1,039 | 1,284 | 767 | 2,746 | 931 | 1,864 | 2,326 | 2,343 | 15,496 |
| | 9 | 919 | 797 | 1,257 | 1,101 | 755 | 1,816 | 1,092 | 1,627 | 2,401 | 2,555 | 14,329 |
| | High 10 | 517 | 654 | 629 | 1,904 | 700 | 1,852 | 989 | 1,099 | 2,576 | 3,071 | 14,001 |
| | Total | 13,007 | 11,928 | 11,822 | 15,661 | 11,288 | 20,993 | 10,786 | 17,391 | 18,932 | 21,076 | 152,829 |

52%

Moved to Higher Ratio Class --Moved to Same Ratio Class --Moved to Lower Ratio Class --

Results: In the two ten-year periods 1981-1991 and 1991-2001, approximately 35% of all physicians moved from one county location to another. Of those who moved, 61% went to counties in another state. Women were more likely to move and physicians who recently completed medical school or a residency program were also more likely to move. The overall tendency of movers was to go to places with lower physician-to-population ratios but also to places with higher per capita incomes, smaller total poulations, and lower proportions of non-white population.

Conclusions: The flows of physicians into and out of communities is a function of factors other than simple competition based on numbers of practitioners and population size. The net direction into less competitive areas reflects the relatively strong pull of other factors including lifestyle opportunities and perceived quality of life.

