



# Specialty Trends Among Physician Assistants in the United States

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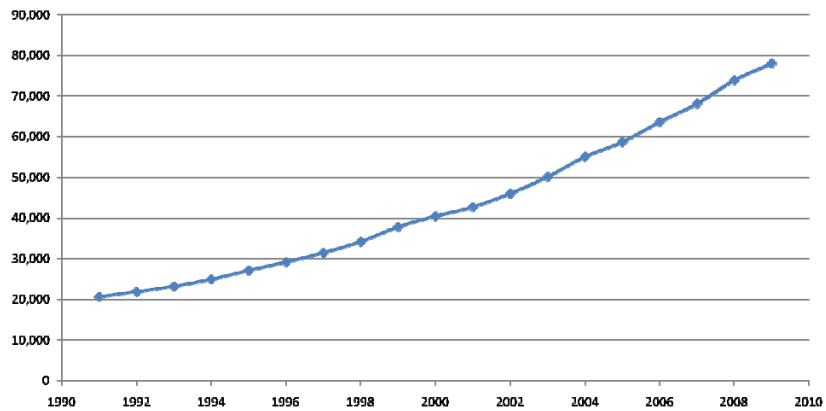
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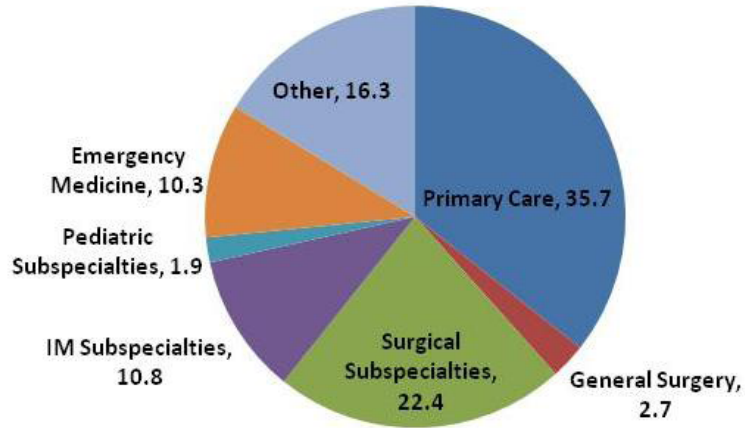


## PA's in Practice at Year-End





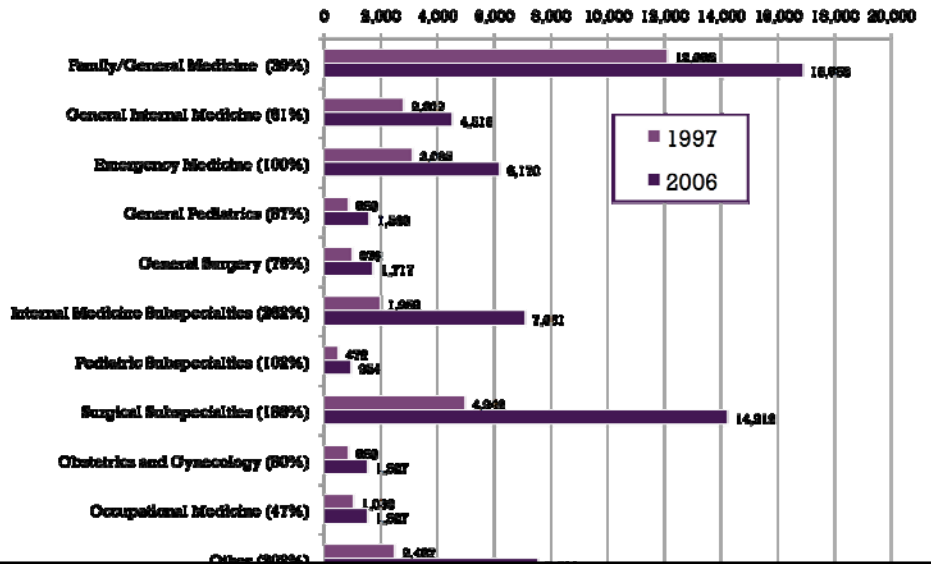
## Specialty



AAPA Census data 2009



## Growth in PA Specialties (Percent): 1997-2006

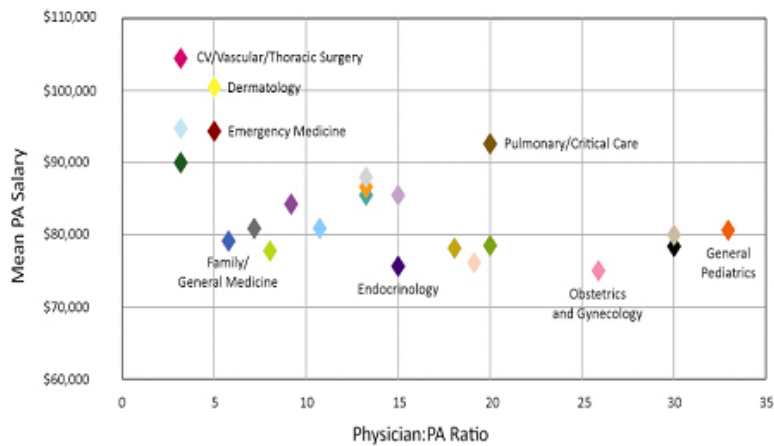




## Physician:PA ratios

- PAs are most common, relative to physicians, in:
  - Orthopedic surgery (1:3)
  - Cardiovascular surgery (1:3)
  - Neurosurgery (1:3)
  - Dermatology (1:5)
  - Emergency medicine (1:5)
  - Family/general medicine (1:6)

## PA mean income vs. physician: PA ratio by specialty





## Summary

- PA numbers are increasing overall
- PA numbers are increasing relative to physician numbers
- The portion of PAs is growing in subspecialty and decreasing in primary care
- PA distribution among the specialties is uneven



## Specialty choice of PAs may be affected by

- **Financial factors**
  - Income differential among specialties
  - Student debt
  - Opportunities for loan forgiveness
- **Individual interests and background**
- **Institutional/system culture**
  - Admissions emphasis/student backgrounds
  - Training emphasis
- **Physician/organization likeliness to hire (demand factors)**



## Policy Question

- Should workforce policy encourage PAs to choose primary care specialties?



## Strategies to increase primary care practice for PAs

- Training program emphasis on PC
  - Federal training grant incentives (Title 7 in U.S.)
  - Admissions policies (demonstrated commitment to service?)
- Teaching Health Centers-will these be centers of interprofessional education?
- Payment reform-revalues PC compared to specialty care
- Utilize specialty mobility attribute of PAs



## Data Sources

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