

Less than Half of New Physicians Stay in New York after Completing Training

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Background

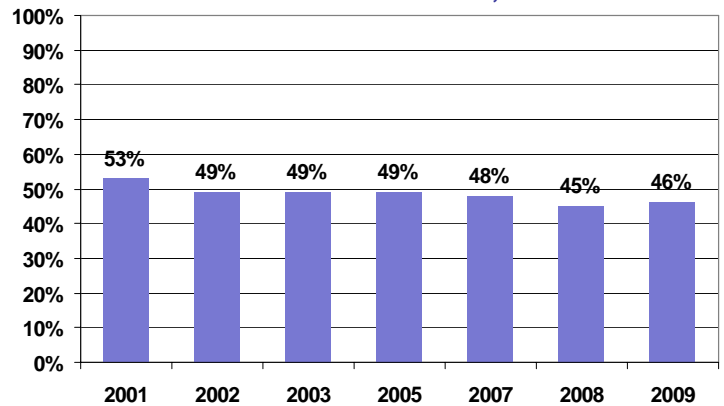
The Center for Health Workforce Studies with the cooperation of GME administrators at New York teaching hospitals conducts an annual survey of all physicians completing a residency or fellowship training program in the state. Since the survey began in 1998, almost 30,000 graduates have completed it. The residents' exit survey is part of the Center's New York Health Workforce Data System which is designed to support ongoing monitoring of the state's health workforce. The components of the system include licensure re-registration surveys for physicians, dentists, dental hygienists, and registered nurses; annual surveys of residents completing training in the state and registered nursing education programs; and the annual state health workforce tracking report. This research brief examines new physicians' in-state retention, why some decide to practice out of state, and what recruitment incentives were most important to them in choosing a practice location.

Key Findings

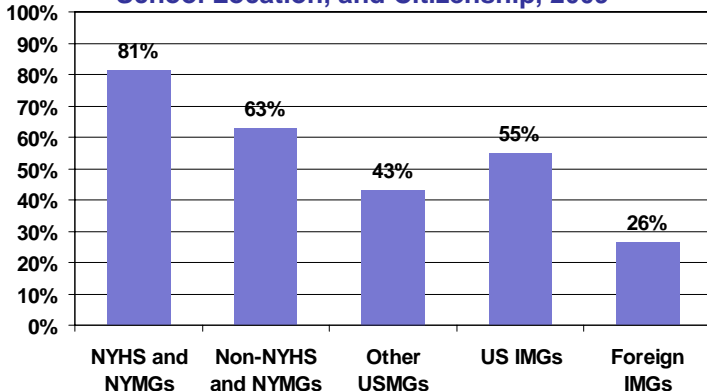
Less than half of new physicians stayed in New York after completing training.

The in-state retention of new physicians has gradually declined in recent years from a high of 53% in 2001 to a low of 45% in 2008. A 1% decrease in the in-state retention implies that approximately 50 fewer physicians are staying in New York after completing training. The percentages of newly-trained physicians reporting plans to practice in New York in the past couple of years were the lowest they've been since the survey began.

Percentage of Residents/Fellows Reporting Confirmed Practice Plans in NY, 2001-2009



Percentage of Residents/Fellows Reporting Confirmed Practice Plans in NY by High School Location, Medical School Location, and Citizenship, 2009



New physicians who attended a New York high school and a New York medical school were the most likely to report plans to practice in New York after completing GME training.

Whether new physicians stayed in New York after completing training varied widely by where they went to high school and their medical school location. In 2009, 81% of individuals who went to high school in New York and attended medical school in New York planned to practice in New York. In contrast, just 63% of those who attended medical school in New York but did not go to high school in New York reported plans to practice in New York. International medical graduates who were not U.S. citizens were the least likely to stay in New York (26%).

Proximity to family was the main reason cited by new physicians for planning to practice outside of New York.

Twenty-four percent (24%) of residents and fellows cited proximity to family as the main reason for leaving New York after completing training. The next most reported reasons were better jobs in desired location outside New York (14%) and better salary offered outside New York (10%). When physicians were asked to report all reasons for leaving New York, 52% indicated better salary offered outside New York, followed by cost of living in New York (48%) and more desirable locations outside New York (47%).

Reasons for Leaving New York After Completion of Residency/Fellowship, 2009

Reasons for Leaving NY	All Reasons	Main Reason
Overall lack of jobs in NY	26%	8%
Better jobs in desired location outside NY	47%	14%
Better jobs in desired practice setting outside NY	34%	8%
Better jobs outside NY that meet visa requirements	15%	8%
Better salary offered outside NY	52%	10%
Cost of malpractice insurance in NY	19%	2%
Cost of starting a practice in NY	13%	1%
Taxes in NY	30%	1%
Cost of living in NY	48%	7%
Proximity to family	35%	24%
Better job for spouse/partner outside NY	15%	4%
Climate/Weather in NY	27%	5%
Never intended to practice in NY	18%	6%
Other reason	7%	4%
Total	N/A	100%

Most Influential Recruitment Incentive Received for Accepting a Job Offer by Practice Location, 2009

Incentives	Staying in New York	Leaving New York	All
Scholarship	2%	1%	1%
J-1 visa waiver/H-1 visa sponsorship	2%	10%	6%
Sign-on bonus	1%	4%	2%
Income guarantees	44%	48%	46%
On-call payments	1%	1%	1%
Relocation allowances	0%	2%	2%
Part/Spouse job transition	2%	5%	4%
Professional development	38%	19%	28%
Educational loan repay	3%	1%	2%
Other	6%	11%	9%
Total	100%	100%	100%

Income guarantees were the most influential recruitment incentive reported by newly-trained physicians in making their decision to accept a practice position.

Forty-six percent (46%) of newly-trained physicians indicated that income guarantees were the most influential recruitment incentive they received, followed by professional development incentives (28%). Physicians staying in New York, however, were twice as likely as physicians who were leaving to report that professional development incentives were the most influential factor in their decision to accept a position (38% compared to 19%).

One-fifth of new physicians indicated that recruitment incentives were not important at all in their decision to accept a position.

Twenty percent (20%) of new physicians indicated that recruitment incentives were not at all important in their decision to accept a job and another 41% indicated that incentives were only somewhat important. Forty-four percent (44%) of newly-trained physicians indicated that recruitment incentives were moderately or very important in their job decision.

Implications

With less than half of new physicians staying in New York after completing training, it is essential to consider the factors that affect a new physician's decision to remain in the state to practice. This is particularly important given the growing concern about the adequacy of the future physician supply in New York and the recognition that New York's residents are a primary source of physicians in the state.

Survey results suggested that proximity to family was key in choosing a practice location. Residents and fellows who went to high school in New York and trained in New York were also the most likely to stay in New York. Income guarantees and professional development incentives were the most influential recruitment incentives physicians received, but the majority suggested that incentives were only somewhat important or not important at all in their final decision to accept a practice position or not. Planners and policy makers should take these factors into account when designing programs and policies aimed at recruitment and retention of new physicians to practice in New York.

The Center for Health Workforce Studies

This brief was prepared by the Center for Health Workforce Studies at the School of Public Health, University at Albany, State University of New York. The Center's mission is to provide timely, accurate data and conduct policy-relevant research about the health workforce.