

Investing in the Primary Care Workforce



The AAFP urges Congress to invest in strengthening the family physician workforce, especially in underserved areas, and ensure much-needed stability for federal programs.

i Primary Care Physician Shortage

The U.S. faces a critical family physician workforce shortage, compounded by decades of neglect, misalignment of priorities and resources in medical education, and financial pressures from the health care industry. While the current system excels at educating highly specialized physicians and physician researchers, the primary care physician shortage prevents the U.S. from capturing the better outcomes and lower per-capita costs associated with robust primary care systems in other countries. Consistent funding for federal programs is greatly



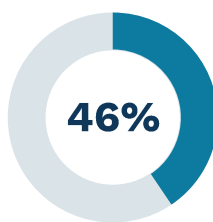
The U.S. will face a shortage of 70,610 **primary care physicians** by 2038.

needed to address these shortages as these programs train and embed primary care physicians in underserved and rural communities across the U.S.

i Federal Programs to Support Primary Care

Various loan repayment programs and the Teaching Health Center Graduate Medical Education (THCGME) program play important roles in the recruitment, training and retention of primary care clinicians. In addition to these critical programs, community health centers (CHCs) provide primary care and preventive services to some of the most vulnerable and underserved populations. Nearly 34 million patients, and 1 in 3 Americans in rural areas, receive care in CHCs annually. Family physicians in particular are key clinicians in CHCs, representing 46% of the clinicians in CHCs nationwide. In addition, through scholarships and loan repayment, the National Health Service Corps (NHSC) supports more than 18,000 primary care clinicians that serve nearly 19 million patients annually. NHSC not only

recruits physicians to high-need areas but is also an effective retention tool in those same areas. 83% of family physicians who participate in NHSC are still practicing in high need areas six years after they complete their residencies.



of community health center clinicians are **family physicians** – the largest share of any clinician type.

i Legislative Solutions



Increase the amount and prevent the lapse in funding for CHCs and the NHSC. CHC and NHSC funding will lapse by the end of 2026. **The AAFP strongly urges Congress to pass a multi-year agreement to prevent a lapse in funding the CHC Fund and the NHSC.** Stable, multi-year funding is crucial to ensuring that tens of millions of Americans don't lose access to the health care they rely on.