

**Mission:**

To protect, promote & improve the health of all people in Florida through integrated state, county & community efforts.



**Ron DeSantis**  
Governor

**Scott A. Rivkees, MD**  
State Surgeon General

**Vision:** To be the **Healthiest State** in the Nation

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## Physician Workforce Advisory Council (PWAC)

### Meeting Minutes

**May 17, 2021**  
**2:00 PM to 4:00 PM**

#### **Welcome/Introductions/Opening Remarks:**

Dr. Scott Rivkees opened the meeting by thanking attendees for their support of the important work being done by this Council as we look for ways to maximize our physician workforce across the state. He also gave a brief overview of the topics to be discussed, including the National Health Services Corps, Graduate Medical Education and the 2020 Physician Workforce Annual Report.

#### **The following council members were in attendance:**

Scott Rivkees, MD, Chair  
Debra Andree, MD  
Saima Chaudhry, MD  
Ulyee Choe, DO  
Michael Curtis, MBA  
Linda Delo, DO  
Cuc Mai, MD  
Joan St. Onge, MD, Vice-Chair  
Michael Patete, MD  
Mark Sandhouse, DO  
Dennis Saver, MD  
Brett Scotch, DO  
Emily Sikes  
Steven Sonenreich, MBA  
Joedrecka Brown Speights, MD

#### **Additional people attending the meeting:**

Nathan Dunn, Florida Department of Health (DOH)  
Gwen Freeman, DOH  
Terry Meek, Council of Florida Medical School Deans  
Kelly Parker, Florida Agency for Health Care Administration  
Jarrod Fowler, Florida Medical Association  
Debbie Reich, DOH

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Allison Stachnick, DOH  
Rodger Strickland, Board of Governors  
Keri Taggart, DOH

## **Business**

### **1. Approval of Minutes**

There was a motion to approve the September 30, 2020 meeting minutes, followed by a second motion. There was no opposition. The minutes were approved.

### **2. National Health Service Corps**

Debbie Reich, the Director of Florida's Primary Care Office, provided an update regarding the National Health Service Corps (NHSC) in Florida.

The NHSC has received an additional \$800 million dollars to award to loan repayors beginning with the May 2021 application cycle. The NHSC is encouraging potential clinicians to apply. Clinicians can apply through May 27, 2021. This influx of additional funding opens opportunities for clinicians at sites with lower scoring Health Professional Shortage Area (HPSA) scores to apply. A Score of 14 is the traditional cut off. However, because of this influx of funding, lower-scored facilities have an increased opportunity for their clinicians to receive the loan repayment funds.

The Health Workforce Connector, located at <https://connector.hrsa.gov/connector/> is a website for potential loan repayors to seek employment in Florida.

Florida currently has 532 NHSC loan repayors practicing at 295 sites throughout the state. There are 128 physician loan repayors among the 532 clinicians. Eight physicians are practicing at rural sites. There are 115 practicing at urban sites.

Questions/Comments:

Dr. Rivkees asked if the \$800 million funding was a one-time occurrence. Ms. Reich explained that the funding will be a one-time occurrence due to the pandemic.

It was also asked if there has been any discussion regarding altering the necessary HPSA score. Ms. Reich stated that due to the influx of funding, those with lower HPSA scores may have a higher chance of securing a loan until the funds are depleted.

### **3. Graduate Medical Education Information**

Dr. Joan St. Onge provided a review of the status of Graduate Medical Education (GME).

The presentation covered the impressive growth of GME slots from 2016–2021. Dr. St. Onge discussed the anticipated growth of the number of physicians in residency and fellowship areas to be about 250. Most growth has been in Internal Medicine as programs mature and more fellowships develop as a result. Programs such as surgery and emergency medicine lead, while areas such as child adolescence and addiction psychiatry remain stagnant.

Questions/Comments:

It was clarified that about 500 out of 1,781 individuals came directly from Internal Medicine.

Dr. Rivkees inquired about the individuals who do not match after their first year out of medical school and

any data that compares this occurrence in Florida to other states. Dr. St. Onge stated that these individuals often engage in research and/or return to school to earn their masters. It was also mentioned that the data to compare may be located and discussed at a later date.

#### **4. Physician Workforce Annual Report**

Nathan Dunn discussed the 2020 Physician Workforce Annual Report.

The data from the survey that physicians take every two years was used in this report. The council played an instrumental role in editing this survey. This report is the first to reflect the responses gathered from the survey that was edited in 2017–2018. Topics covered in the report include telemedicine and practice location. The percentages of minority physicians and female physicians are increasing. A total of 8.7% of physicians plan to retire within the next five years. Mr. Dunn encouraged attendees to focus on pages 42 and 43 of the report which outline recommendations crafted by the PWAC in the fall of 2020. Mr. Dunn also mentioned that he reached out to the Safety Net Hospital Association to confirm they are working to provide an updated analysis of the physician workforce that will be ready by the end of 2021.

Questions/Comments:

It was clarified that in Figure 23 of the report, the second bar represents dermatology and the fourth bar represents family medicine.

A question was asked regarding the overlap of need in specialty areas in relation to the pandemic. Mr. Dunn stated there are no items related to that in the report. This is a topic the council may discuss further to identify necessary action.

#### **5. Public Comment**

The was no public comment provided.

#### **6. Next Steps and Future Goals**

Dr. Saver posed a question related to the creation of work groups. Dr. Rivkees stated that we can follow up on this, and he instructed attendees to forward any thoughts/comments to Nathan Dunn.

Rural health and ethnic/racial disparities were identified as two key areas to focus on in the future. A work plan with action items was also discussed.

The next meeting will be held August 19, 2021.

The meeting adjourned at 3:30 P.M.