

**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

**August 19, 2021  
3:00 PM to 5:00 PM**

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

Dr. Scott Rivkees opened the meeting by thanking attendees for the time and effort they contribute to the Physicians Workforce Advisory Council. He reiterated that the aim of the council is to determine ideas and strategies to help maximize our physician workforce across the state. Dr. Rivkees provided a brief overview of the topics that would be discussed during the meeting. These included a review of the 2021 Annual Report, recommendations for the report, a discussion surrounding ideas sent in by council members and an update regarding the Physician Assistant's Survey.

Dr. Rivkees took a moment to honor Dr. Dennis Saver, a member since 2016, who passed away in July.

#### **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  
Emily Sikes  
Steven Sonenreich, MBA  
Anthony Speights, MD

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

Nathan Dunn, Florida Department of Health (DOH)  
Cheryl Love, Florida Hospital Association  
Madison Prewitt, Agency for Health Care Administration (AHCA)  
Roger Strickland, Board of Governors

## **Business**

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

Dr. Andree motioned to approve the May 17, 2021, meeting minutes. This was followed by a second motion from Dr. St. Onge. There was no opposition. The minutes were approved.

### **2. Physician Workforce Annual Report—Key Findings**

Nathan Dunn, Strategic Projects Manager, discussed the data derived from the 2021 Physician Workforce Annual Report. It was explained that while the report is under internal review, excerpts could be shared for the purpose of this meeting.

The 2021 Physician Workforce Annual Report relies on responses of physicians across the state. The report is based on the responses of 55,809 physicians who completed the survey and indicated they are providing direct patient care in Florida. This year's report accounts for just a portion of the Covid-19 pandemic, but the next survey will cover the majority of pandemic related topics.

Mr. Dunn highlighted the following information from the report: less than two percent of physicians (1,059) have a direct patient care practice in Florida's rural counties, both the number and percentage of female physicians is increasing and the percentage of minority physicians has been increasing since 2011–2012. He also encouraged attendees to reference page seven for information about how the survey reflects the majority of physicians, page eight for information about the demonstrated area of ethnicity changes and page 11 for information about physician specialties.

Questions/Comments:

Dr. Rivkees asked if the subspecialties included in the report are all board certified. His question was related to an earlier comment that questioned the inclusion of a sufficient number of specialties on the survey. Dr. Rivkees stated that any recommendations regarding the inclusion of specialties can be made via the formal process of rule changing.

### **3. Recommendations for the Physician Workforce Annual Report**

Mr. Dunn led a discussion regarding the recommendations that members have made for the Physician Workforce Annual Report.

Most of the discussion centered around recommendations related to Covid-19, mental health and subspecialties. One specific recommendation was to provide more funding for programs that focus on supporting capable students who lack support and resources.

### **4. Physician Workforce Advisory Council Strategic Plan**

Mr. Dunn reviewed the highlights from the strategic plan. The Council did not approve the strategic plan after it was revised by a workgroup. Several of the items from that strategic plan have been completed, such as the revision to the Physician Licensure survey.

### **5. Physician Assistant Survey and Report**

Paul A. Vasquez, JD, Executive Director, Florida Board of Medicine, gave a presentation on the Physician Assistant Survey Report.

Sections 458.347 and 459.002, Florida Statutes, require physician assistants, as part of their biennial license renewal, to complete a workforce survey comparable to the physician workforce survey completed by allopathic and osteopathic physicians. The survey and report are to be administered and prepared in the same manner as the physician workforce survey and report

established pursuant to § 458.3191, F.S. A draft of the 2021 Physician Assistant Workforce Report has been prepared, and it presents a summary and preliminary analysis of the 2019–2021 Physician Assistant Workforce Survey data.

Based on the available information at the time the draft report was compiled, there were 11,461 physician assistants licensed to practice in Florida. Of these physician assistants, 9,397 renewed their license for the period of 2021 through 2023 and responded to the workforce survey. Of the physician assistants renewing their license, 84.3% (7,920) were practicing in Florida as of July 2021. Survey results presented in the draft report are based on these physician assistants, unless otherwise specified.

While the number of physician assistants in Florida continues to increase, 2019–2021 Physician Assistant Workforce Survey data compared to Florida’s July 2019 population estimates, by gender, race and ethnicity show that minority physician assistants are under-represented in some cases. More of Florida’s actively practicing physician assistants are females—65.1% compared to 34.9% for males.

The average age of physician assistants based on the available information is 43, with a range of 25 to 88 years of age. Most physician assistants, 74.3% (5,827), are under 50 years of age, followed by 12.6% (1,225) within 50 to 59 years of age and 9.9% (786) 60 years of age and older. The top 5 specialty areas for physician assistants are Internal Medicine (21%), Family Medicine (15.9%), Emergency Medicine (15.8%), Surgery (14.1%), and Orthopedic Medicine (9.3%).

Primary Care physician assistants account for 23.3% of the physician assistant workforce. This includes all subspecialties of Family Medicine and Pediatric Medicine as well as the General and Addiction subspecialties of Internal Medicine. The percentage of physician assistants working in an office practice setting is 50.6%, while 34.9% practice in a hospital.

Approximately 81% of physician assistants reported spending 30 to 100 hours or more per week on direct patient care; 72% of this group spend 30 to 59 hours on direct patient care each week. Survey responses revealed that 7.8% of practicing physician assistants plan to retire within the next five years. The average age of physician assistants planning to retire is 63. In addition, 7.7% of physician assistants reported planning to relocate out of state in the next 5 years.

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

The meeting adjourned at 5:00 P.M.

The next meeting will be held on September 27, 2021.