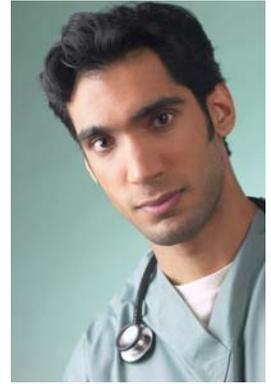


Audience Insights

Communicating to Family Physicians



A family physician is concerned with the total health care of the individual and the family and is trained to diagnose and treat a wide variety of ailments in patients of all ages. The family physician receives a broad range of training that includes internal medicine, pediatrics, obstetrics and gynecology, psychiatry, and geriatrics.¹ They differ from internists who treat mostly adults 18 and over and specialize in the diagnosis and treatment of disease.

Trends Among Today's Family Physicians

1. The need for family physicians in the U.S. will nearly double by 2020 to 139,531. At present, there are over 94,600 practicing family physicians.²
2. Family physicians are the single largest category of specialists in both rural and urban community health centers, accounting for 48.1% of the total physician staff.³
3. In 2005, 216 million office visits were made to family physicians; this is 48 million more than any other specialty.⁴
4. More than 90% of family physicians treat Medicare patients, and over 75% of family physicians accept Medicaid.²
5. Some family physicians turn over care of hospitalized patients to full-time hospitalist physicians (physicians that see patients in a hospital setting), many of whom are family physicians themselves.⁵
6. In some communities, family physicians also provide a significant amount of maternity care in their practice.⁶
7. Medical Web sites and professional journals are highly regarded sources of health-related information for family physicians.⁷
8. Recent innovations in family medicine practice include:
 - **Group visits**; a two-hour group visit with 20 patients that allows ample time for family physicians to provide education.⁸
 - **Healthcare teams** of physician-assistants, nurses, and health educators to better meet increasing need for extensive chronic disease management of patients.⁹
 - **The medical home**; a team of family physicians, nurse practitioners, physician assistants, and others that provide comprehensive primary care and chronic disease management through expanded hours and use of telephone, email and electronic medical records.¹⁰

Audience Insights can help you to communicate more effectively with your priority populations in order to influence their behavior. CDC's Strategic and Proactive Communication Branch (SPCB) divides audiences into smaller homogeneous segments with similar needs, preferences, and characteristics and provides CDC programs with audience-specific information, marketing expertise, and communication planning. To develop **Audience Insights**, secondary data is collected and analyzed from CDC-licensed consumer databases, books, articles, and the Internet. **For more information, email SPCBHealthMktg@cdc.gov or contact Lynn Sokler, SPCB, at lsokler@cdc.gov.**



U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
Office of the Associate Director for Communication
Division of Communication Services
Strategic and Proactive Communication Branch



Family Physicians at-a-Glance

These composites are for illustrative purposes only.



“My patients frequently want the newest high-tech gizmo or pill they’ve heard about or seen on TV. I stick to prescribing the most appropriate medications for my patients after a thorough work-up and necessary diagnostic tests.”

William Ishizuka, M.D. (Rural group practice)

Oxnard, CA

Age: 38

- ◆ Is in a busy three-person family practice group located in a rural area . Group also provides care in obstetrics and gynecology.
- ◆ 22% of patients are on Medicare, 12% receive Medicaid, 35% are in HMOs or IPAs, 22% have other health insurance, 9% have no health insurance.
- ◆ Relies on a network of 15 specialists for patient referrals. To remain certified, he completes many hours of continuing medical education (CME) each year, mostly online.
- ◆ Cares for entire families. Many of his patients speak Japanese and are more comfortable visiting a physician who understands them and their culture.



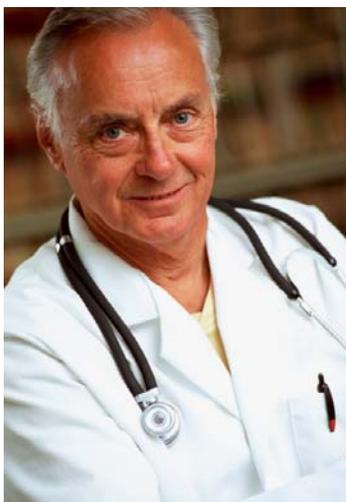
“Many of my older patients have chronic health conditions and see me on a routine basis. My practice is growing. I’ve moved to electronic medical records and computer-assisted patient data systems that allow my patients to update their conditions electronically at every visit.”

Phyllis Epps, M.D. (Inner city group practice)

Philadelphia, PA

Age: 55

- ◆ Completed a residency in gastroenterology medicine at UCLA in Santa Monica, CA, but wanted to practice medicine for the “whole patient”.
- ◆ Frequently goes to CMEweb.com, eMedicine.com or her medical school’s Web site for grand rounds and lectures by way of video on the Internet.
- ◆ Is in a group practice with five other family physicians and nurse practitioners.
- ◆ Is promoting group visits with 20 diabetic patients at a time; focuses on nutrition, exercise, and compliance with medication use.



“I’m an early adopter of technology and use my BlackBerry® and Epocrates Rx to check on drug information, including possible side effects. It’s hard to keep up with everything but I want to incorporate the latest, most effective medical and technologically advanced practices.”

Patrick Austin, M.D. (Small group practice in rural city)

Jackson, Mississippi

Age: 64

- ◆ Has been in a solo family practice for 32 years in the same office location; treats several multi-generational families.
- ◆ Uses a BlackBerry® to log patient information and receives radiological images from the local hospital on it as well.
- ◆ His medical office is located near the hospital he uses when his patients require in-hospital treatment.
- ◆ Spends more than 15% of his time caring for children.
- ◆ Is contemplating retirement in 5 years. He and his wife plan to retire in Phoenix, Arizona.

Targeted Health Communication

Knowing the **habits and preferences** of Family Physicians can help you plan health communication and marketing efforts for this audience.

- ▶ Medical Web sites and journals are highly regarded as sources of health-related information for family physicians.
- ▶ Online physician communities are becoming more of a resource to discuss patient care and solicit feedback. Consider banner advertising on such online communities as the 6000-physician-member community Web site Sermo, www.sermo.com[†], as well as WebMD's recently launched Medscape Physician Connect, www.medscape.com/connect[†]. However, 75% of family physicians often or regularly obtain health-related information from other physicians and also consider CDC a reliable information source.
- ▶ Specialty-aligned professional medical groups and their Web sites, such as the American College of Physicians - Internists - Doctors for Adults^{sm†} can be utilized to reach this audience.
- ▶ As young doctors come into family practice, the online tools they access will be increasingly good ways to reach them.
- ▶ Sixty-two percent of family physicians never or rarely view medical podcasts.⁷
- ▶ Many family physician practices rely on nurses or practice managers to download and post information in their offices. This should be considered in any materials dissemination strategy.
- ▶ Remember, all physicians today have very limited time, so don't make them read through heavy text documents. Make it easy for them to get your information quickly along with your call-to-action (i.e., what you are asking them to do).

Health-Related Information Sources Used by Family Physicians

Family physicians use the following sources “often” or “regularly” to obtain health-related information:

Source	Often or Regularly
Medical journals	82%
Other physicians	75%
Medical Web sites	70%
Government agencies	48%
Books	47%
Medical podcasts	15%

SOURCE: Porter Novelli's DocStyles, 2008⁷

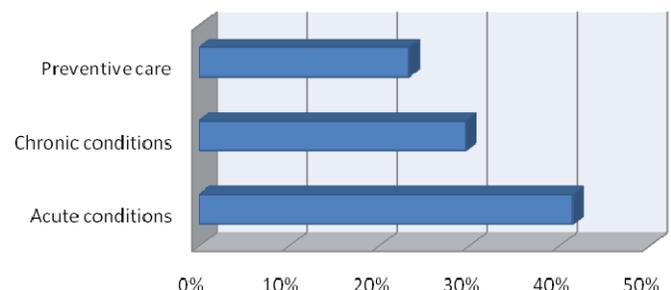
Family physicians most frequently use journals (93%), Internet sites (87%), and conferences (85%) to pursue their continuing medical education.⁷

Family Medicine Practices in the U.S.

Types of family medicine practices:⁶

- 69.8% are group practices
 - 18.4% are individual practices
 - 11.8% are hospital or clinic-based practices
- ▶ Sixty percent of family physicians care for newborns, and 20% of visits are with children.¹¹
 - ▶ Primary care includes health promotion, disease prevention, health maintenance, counseling, patient education, diagnosis and treatment of acute and chronic illnesses in a variety of health care settings (e.g., office, inpatient, critical care, long-term care, home care, etc.).¹²

Reason for visit to Primary Care Physician



SOURCE: CDC - Advance Data from Vital and Health Statistics.¹³

Facts about Family Physicians

- ▶ Family physicians receive extensive training in the care of infants, children, and adolescents since these are key patients in their practice.¹⁴
- ▶ One in four of all office visits are made to family physicians.¹⁵
- ▶ The average income of family physicians in 2006 was \$161,000.¹⁶

Number of Family Physicians by Self-Designated Race/Ethnicity			
	Family Physicians	Male	Female
White	49,022	32,636	15,386
Black	3,572	1,561	2,011
Hispanic	4,517	2,860	1,711
Asian	7,618	4,151	3,467
American Indian/ Alaskan Native	954	578	376
Other	284	143	141
Unknown	17,845	12,521	5,324
Total	82,866	54,450	28,416

SOURCE: American Medical Association, *Physician Characteristics and Distribution in the US*, 2008 Edition (Chicago: AMA Press, 2008)¹⁷

- ▶ Diversity in the physician workforce is essential for high-quality medical education and access to health-care for the underserved.¹⁸
- ▶ White males make up the majority race/ethnicity of family physicians (39%), followed by white females (19%).¹⁸
- ▶ There are more black female family physicians than male, with the reverse being true for Hispanic family physicians.¹⁸ Also, there are more Asian family physicians than either Hispanic or black.



More on Today's Family Physicians

- ▶ A recent survey by Medical Economics magazine indicates family physicians generally spend between 50 and 55 hours a week caring for patients and managing their practice.¹⁹
- ▶ Family physicians work, on average, three hours fewer per week than internists; two hours fewer than orthopedic surgeons, and 10 hours fewer than cardiologists, gastroenterologists, general surgeons, and obstetricians.¹⁹
- ▶ More than 80% of family physicians choose to have hospital privileges.⁶
- ▶ Nearly one-fourth of family physicians have reported working part-time at some point in their careers to accommodate personal and professional needs.¹⁹
- ▶ Typical work breakdown for family physicians:²⁰
 - 40 hours per week in direct patient care
 - An additional 10 hours, or 50 hours total, per week in patient-related activities
 - 47 weeks - Average number of weeks worked in one year
- ▶ Family physicians typically schedule five weeks per year for vacation or continuing medical education courses.²⁰

Electronic Media Use by Family Physicians, Including Web 2.0

- ▶ 96.9% own or use high speed Internet in their office.⁷
- ▶ 69% own or use a Personal Digital Assistant (PDA).⁷
- ▶ 14% of family physicians report using a mobile device such as a BlackBerry®.²¹
- ▶ Nearly a third of medical schools are now requiring new students to have a PDA.²¹



Attitudes/Opinions of Family Physicians on Health-Related Information Provided by Patients

The majority of family physicians are appreciative of patients providing them with health-related information. Market research conducted with family physicians indicates:

- ▶ 87.4% strongly agree or agree that their patients commonly tell them about health-related information they have read, seen, or heard in the news.⁷
- ▶ The majority of family physicians value (66.8%) or truly appreciate (67.3%) health-related information provided by patients and/or their parents.⁷

Physician Shortage

Estimates suggest that by 2020 the U.S. healthcare system will be 40,000 doctors short of where it needs to be in the primary care arena to support the demand for medical care. Experts believe that the primary reason for this shortage is the payment structure. A specialist can earn \$500K a year or more and work 20 hours a week, while a family doctor will make closer to \$150K and work 60 hours a week. Incentives are changing in order to recruit more medical students into primary care, but if the situation is not fixed it will cause an even greater strain on these already overburdened clinicians.²²



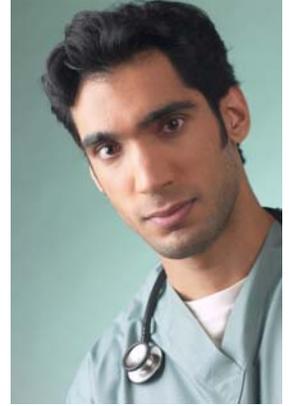
References

1. American Medical Association. "Choosing a specialty" Copyright 1995-2009 American Medical Association. Available at: <http://www.ama-assn.org/ama/pub/education-careers/becoming-physician/choosing-specialty.shtml>
2. American Association of Family Physicians (2006). AAFP Facts about Family Medicine. Available at: <http://www.aafp.org/facts.xml>
3. Rosenblatt, R. (2006). Shortages of Medical Personnel at Community Health Centers. *JAMA*. 295:1042-1049. Available at: <http://jama.ama-assn.org/cgi/content/full/295/9/1042>
4. American Academy of Family Physicians (2007). Your future is Family Medicine. Available at: http://www.aafp.org/online/etc/medialib/aafp_org/documents/about/ffm-presentation/Handout.Par.0001.File.tmp/ffm-flyer07.pdf
5. Wachter, R. Goldman, L. (1996). The emerging role of "hospitalists" in the American Healthcare System. *NEJM* Volume 335:514-517. Available at: http://content.nejm.org/cgi/content/full/335/7/514?ijkey=94dd9caa5ea270cf799a127e2837a720ffc0950f&keytype=tf_ipsecsha
6. American Academy of Family Physicians (July 2007). Responses to Medical Students' Frequently Asked Questions About Family Medicine. Available at: <http://www.aafp.org/afp/2007/0701/p99.html>
7. Porter Novelli's DocStyles National Survey, 2008.
8. Masley, S. Sokoloff, J. Hawes, C. (2000). Planning Group Visits for High-Risk Patients. Available at: <http://www.aafp.org/fpm/20000600/33plan.html>.
9. Bein, B. (2009). Family Medicine Residencies Are Incorporating Medical Home Model. Available at: Bein, B. (2009). Family Medicine Residencies Are Incorporating Medical Home Model. Available at: <http://www.aafp.org/online/en/home/publications/news/news-now/pcmh/20090217pcmh-resids.html>.
10. American Academy of Family Physicians. Patient-centered Medical Home. Available at: <http://www.aafp.org/online/en/home/membership/initiatives/pcmh.html>.
11. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Public Health Service, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Health Statistics, 2001. Available from: www.aafp.org/x24578.xml.
12. AAFP: *Primary Care* available at: <http://www.aafp.org/online/en/home/policy/policies/p/primarycare.html>
13. Cherry, D. (2004). National Ambulatory Medical Care Survey: 2005 Summary. Advance Data from Vital and Health Statistics; No. 346, Hyattsville, Maryland: National Center for Health Statistics. Available at: <http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/ad/ad346.pdf>
14. Bush, R. Dekker, A. Feldman, E. Waitz, M. (September 2002). Family physicians and health care for adolescents. *Journal of Adolescent Health*. 31(3): 221-222.
15. American Academy of Family Physicians Launches Consumer Alliance With First Partner: The Coca-Cola Company. (2009). Available at: <http://www.aafp.org/online/en/home/media/releases/newsreleases-statements-2009/consumeralliance-cocacola.html>
16. Merritt Hawkins & Assoc. 2009 Review of Physician and CRNA Recruiting Incentives. (2009). Available at: <http://www.merrithawkins.com/pdf/mha2009incentivessurvey.pdf>
17. American Medical Association Physician Characteristics and Distribution in the US. 2008 Edition (Chicago: AMA Press, 2008)
18. Reede, J. (2003). A recurring theme: the need for minority physicians. *Health Aff (Millwood)*. 22:91-93.
19. American Academy of Family Physicians (2007). Your future is Family Medicine. Available at: http://www.aafp.org/online/etc/medialib/aafp_org/documents/about/ffm-presentation/Talking_Points_PDF.Par.0001.File.tmp/TalkingPoints07.pdf

References (cont'd)

20. Staiger, D. Aurbach, D. Baurhaus, P. (2010). Trends in the work hours of physicians in the United States *JAMA*.303(8):747-753. Available at: <http://jama.ama-assn.org/cgi/content/full/303/8/747>
21. Johnson, M. (2006) More Medical Schools Requiring PDAs. Available at: <http://www.epocrates.com/company/news/10266.html>
22. Kavilanz, P. (July 2009). Family doctors: An endangered breed. Available at: http://money.cnn.com/2009/07/16/news/economy/healthcare_doctors_shortage/index.htm?postversion=2009071807





Audience Insights

Communicating to Family Physicians

For more information, email SPCBHealthMktg@cdc.gov or contact Lynn Sokler, SPCB, at Lsokler@cdc.gov

Internet: <http://www.cdc.gov/healthmarketing/resources.htm#insights>

Intranet: <http://intranet.cdc.gov/NCHM/DCHM/MCSB>



U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
Office of the Associate Director for Communication
Division of Communication Services
Strategic and Proactive Communication Branch

