Georgia Graduate Medical Education Exit Survey Report

Based on responses to the 2026 GME Exit Survey

Georgia Board of Health Care Workforce

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Executive Summary

This report is the Georgia Board of Health Care Workforce's (GBHCW) 24th annual report of physicians graduating from Georgia's graduate medical education (GME) programs. This report provides valuable insights into the experiences of GME graduates and contributes to a deeper understanding of healthcare workforce trends. The findings aim to support medical educators, policymakers, healthcare organizations, and community stakeholders in making informed decisions about physician supply and demand across Georgia. The survey offers insight into residents' demographic characteristics, compensation and debt levels, retention rates, practice plans, assessments of the job market, and training experience.

Methodology

During this survey period, which went from April 1st to June 10th, 2026, 926 Georgia GME graduates, representing 88.8% of the total GME graduates funded by GBHCW, completed the GME Exit Survey. This reflects a 6.9% decrease from the 995 responses received last year. GBHCW collected GME survey responses through an online form. The survey link was distributed via email to GME program Directors and Coordinators. The GBHCW data team then sent automated weekly reminders and status update emails to each program until the completion deadline of June 10th. Analyses presented here were conducted using Microsoft Excel.

The response rates for each question vary and are reported as the "total" for each question.

All Georgia GME programs funded by GBHCW that have graduates participated in the survey and are as follows in Table 1. The GBHCW would like to thank all GME programs for their assistance in this data collection endeavor.

Participating GME Programs

Table 1: Respondents and Survey Completion Rate by Program, 2026

Program Name	Completions	Percent of Total Respondents	Total Graduates	Survey Completion Rate
Emory University School of Medicine	340	36.7%	430	79.1%
Medical College of Georgia at Augusta University	157	17.0%	165	95.2%
Northeast Georgia Health System	59	6.4%	62	95.2%
Morehouse School of Medicine	52	5.6%	56	92.9%
Wellstar Kennestone Hospital	49	5.3%	49	100.0%
Memorial Health University Medical Center	35	3.8%	43	81.4%
Atrium Health Navicent	33	3.6%	32	103.1%
Northside Gwinnett Medical Center	24	2.6%	25	96.0%
Piedmont Athens Regional Medical Center	18	1.9%	22	81.8%
Piedmont Macon Medical Center	18	1.9%	17	105.9%
Hamilton Medical Center	16	1.7%	18	88.9%
Advent Health - Redmond	13	1.4%	12	108.3%
Piedmont Columbus Regional Midtown	12	1.3%	12	100.0%
UGA School of Medicine	11	1.2%	11	100.0%
Emory Healthcare-St. Francis	10	1.1%	10	100.0%
Wellstar Cobb Hospital	10	1.1%	10	100.0%
Gateway Behavioral Health	9	1.0%	9	100.0%
Wellstar Spalding Medical Center	9	1.0%	9	100.0%
Atrium Health Floyd	8	0.9%	8	100.0%
South Georgia Medical Center	8	0.9%	8	100.0%
Colquitt Regional Medical Center	7	0.8%	7	100.0%
Phoebe Putney Memorial Hospital	7	0.8%	7	100.0%
Emory Healthcare-Warner Robins	6	0.6%	6	100.0%
Wellstar Douglas Medical Center	6	0.6%	6	100.0%
Archbold Medical Center	5	0.5%	5	100.0%
Memorial Satilla Health	4	0.4%	4	100.0%
Totals	**926**	**100.0%**	**1043**	**88.8%**

Key Findings from the 2026 GME Exit Survey

Demographic Analysis

- 49.0% identified as female, 50.8% identified as male, and 0.2% identified as Genderqueer or Non-binary. This reflects a 0.2 percentage point decline in the number of female respondents compared to the 2025 survey, in which 49.2% identified as female.
- In 2026, 53.6% of female-identified respondents were completing a primary care/core specialty, compared to 46.7% of male-identified respondents. This reflects a 2.2 percentage point increase for females and a corresponding 1.9 percentage point decline in males from 2025. There are more males graduating in non-primary care specialties in 2026.
- Internal Medicine is still the most sought-after specialty amongst graduates for female (48.3%) and male graduates (51.7%). In total, Internal Medicine graduates, regardless of gender, accounted for 28% of all graduates.
- Female-identified respondents made up 50.0% or more of the respondents in the following primary care/core specialties: Obstetrics and Gynecology (82.8%), Pediatrics (69.8%), Family Medicine (59.2%), Psychiatry (53.7%), and Emergency Medicine (51.1%). Compared to prior data, we saw the largest declines in Psychiatry (-21.3%), Obstetrics and Gynecology (-10.3%), and Pediatrics (-8.0%).
- Like previous years, the age group 30-24 makes up the largest group in the age distribution of graduates, making up 60.6%. The smallest age group is 40 and above, which accounts for 6.9%. The 40 and above group declined by 1.7 percentage points from last year's group of graduates.
- 86% of respondents identified as U.S. Citizens (Native, Naturalized, or Derived). This represents a slight decrease of 1.7 percentage points from the class of 2025.
- In terms of racial demographics, the majority of graduates are white (46%), however, there was a 2.2 percentage point decline since last year. Asian or Pacific Islander graduates represented 27.9%, which had a 0.6 percentage point increase. Black/African American graduates represented 20.0% of graduates, which showed a slight increase of 3.2 percentage points. Those who identified themselves as multi-racial represented 3.9%.

Education: High School

- 26.6% of respondents graduated from High School in Georgia, which is slightly higher than the 26.5% reported last year.
- Among residency graduates, 45.5% of respondents graduated from an out-of-state high school, while 34.6% graduated from a High School in Georgia.

- Of the respondents who just completed their fellowship, the majority (60.9%) graduated from an out-of-state high school, 17.2% graduated from a high school in other countries, and 21.9% graduated from a high school in Georgia.

Education: Medical School

- The percentage of respondents holding an Osteopathic (DO) degree increased from last year, 15.1%, to 17.9% this year.
- 24.5% of respondents attended medical school in Georgia. This represents a 3.4 percentage point increase from the class of 2025.
- Of those graduates who completed their residency program, 41.3% attended medical school in another state, while only 28.1% completed medical school in Georgia, 11.8% attended medical school in an offshore/Caribbean country, and 18.8% attended medical school in other countries. There were increases in the following categories: Medical school in Georgia (+3.8 % points) and medical school in other countries (+5.9 % points).
- Among respondents who recently completed their fellowships. 62.7% completed medical school in another U.S. state or Territory, 17.6% completed medical school in another country, 13.7% completed medical school in Georgia, and the remaining 6.0% completed medical school in an offshore island/Caribbean school.
- Of the respondents who attended medical school in Georgia and completed a residency program, the highest number of graduates are from Medical College of Georgia (40.6%). This is followed by Mercer University School of Medicine (21.9%), Emory University School of Medicine (15.6%), PCOM-Georgia (15.6%), and Morehouse School of Medicine (6.3%).
- Of the respondents who attended medical school in Georgia and completed a residency program, the highest number of graduates are from Medical College of Georgia (40.6%). This is followed by Mercer University School of Medicine (21.9%), Emory University School of Medicine (15.6%), PCOM-Georgia (15.6%), and Morehouse School of Medicine (6.3%).
- Of the respondents who attended medical school in Georgia and completed a fellowship, the highest number of graduates are from Mercer University School of Medicine (29.7%). This is followed by Medical College of Georgia (25.1%), PCOM-Georgia (20.5%), Emory University School of Medicine, and Morehouse School of Medicine (12.3%).
- For respondents who pursued residency training, the primary care/core specialty with the highest percentage of respondents trained was Internal Medicine (43.6%), which is 0.1 percentage points less than last year.
- For respondents who pursued a fellowship, the primary care/core specialty with the highest percentage of respondents trained was Surgery (20.0%),

Preventive/Preventive Medicine (20.0%), Neurology (20.0%), and Internal Medicine (20.0%).

- Among the Internal Medicine graduates, 32.8% graduated from medical school in another country. 29.7% of respondents attended medical school in another U.S. State or Territory, 23.2% attended medical school in Georgia, and the remaining 14.3% attended an offshore island/Caribbean school.
- For Family Medicine, 33.3% attended a Georgia medical school. 27.5% attended an offshore island/Caribbean school, 24.2% attended medical school in another U.S. State or Territory, and the remaining 15.0% attended medical school outside of the U.S.

Sub-Specialty

- Among all respondents, 29.4% are pursuing subspecialty training, and out of those, 19.7% are graduating from a program in a primary care/core specialty.
- Internal Medicine has the highest number of graduates entering subspecialty training, totaling 83 graduates. Of these, 50.6% stay in Georgia after graduation, while the remaining 49.4% either go to another U.S. State or Territory or go outside the U.S.
- The top 3 subspecialties pursued by internal medicine graduates are: Cardiovascular Disease (26.5%), Pulmonary Critical Care (15.7%), and 'Endocrinology, Diabetes, and Metabolism' (9.6%).

Debt and Salary

- Respondents reported a mean educational debt of $188,204, with a median debt of $175,100.
- 32.5% of respondents report having no educational debt. This is slightly higher than 32.0% reported last year.
- Overall, the majority of respondents (30.0%) anticipate earning between $200,000 and $299,999 in their first year of practice.
- Respondents anticipated earning an average gross income of $250,789 per year in their first year of practice, with a median income of $277,900. Among all of the primary care/core specialties, Neurology graduates stand out with the highest average expected gross income of $293,412.

Retention

- 52.8% of respondents plan to be in Georgia for their primary activity after the completion of their program, which is an increase of 2.1 percentage points from last year.
- 75.6% of respondents who went to high school in Georgia plan to remain in Georgia after graduation.

    - This compares to the 35.1% of respondents who went to a non-Georgia high school planning to stay in Georgia after graduation.
- 69.2% of respondents who went to medical school in Georgia plan to remain in Georgia after graduation.
    - This compares to the 47.5% of respondents who went to a non-Georgia medical school planning to remain in Georgia after graduation.
- 72.3% of respondents who attended both high school and medical school in Georgia plan to stay in Georgia.
    - This compares to 45.1% of respondents who attended both a non-Georgia high school and medical school and plan to stay in Georgia after graduation.
- The primary care/core specialty with the highest percentage of respondents planning to stay in Georgia after graduation is Family Medicine: 65.8% of those completing this specialty intend to remain in Georgia.
- The primary care/core specialty with the lowest percentage of respondents planning to stay in Georgia is Obstetrics and Gynecology: 31.0% of those completing this specialty intend to remain in Georgia.
- 58.9% of respondents considered one or more job offers in Georgia. This is higher than 57.1% of respondents who considered more than one job offer last year.
- The most selected reasons for leaving Georgia are graduating from a GME program are: Better Salary and Benefits (25.9%), Lack of Jobs/Practice Opportunities (22.8%), and Proximity to Family (18.5%).
- Female-identified respondents are more likely to leave Georgia due to proximity to family, at 19.8%, compared to the 15.6% of male-identified respondents. Male-identified respondents are more likely to leave to pursue “better” opportunities or states with more opportunities (24.2%), compared to 19.0% of female-identified respondents.

Practice Opportunities

- The average of respondents’ overall assessments of practice opportunities in their specialty within 50 miles of the site where they trained is 3.0 on a scale where 1 is very few jobs, and 5 is many jobs. This is slightly lower than the mean average of 3.1 reported last year.
- The average respondents' overall assessments of practice opportunities in their specialty nationally are 3.7 on a scale where 1 is very few jobs, and 5 is many jobs. This is slightly lower than the average reported last year,
- 11.8% of respondents indicated that tort reform exerts a moderate influence on their decision regarding the state in which to practice, while 5.8% reported that it has a strong influence

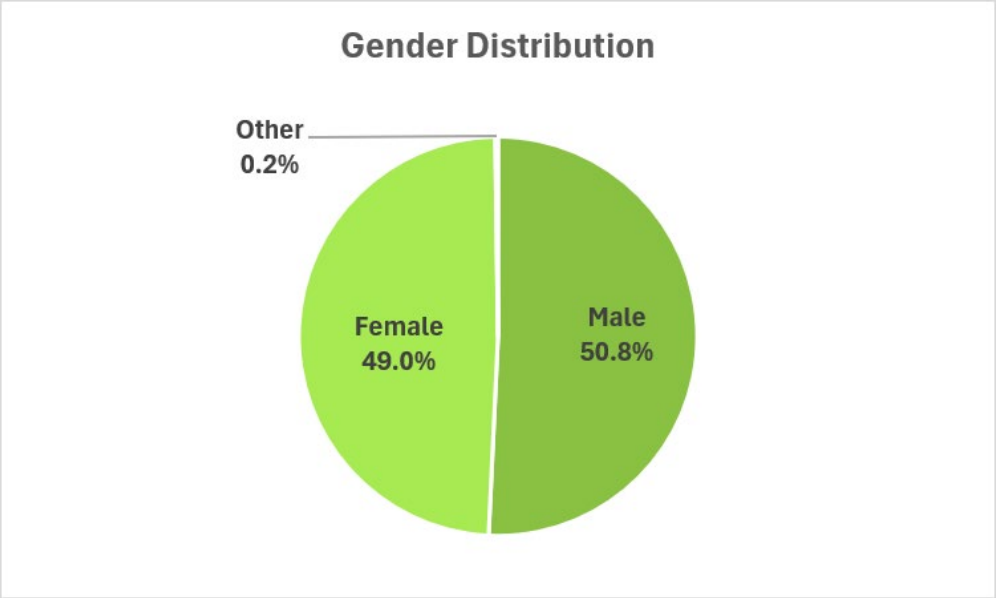
Satisfaction with Training

- The average response to the statement “Overall, I am satisfied with the training I received” is 4.4 on a scale where 1 is very dissatisfied, and 5 is very satisfied. This is about the same as the average reported last year.
- The average agreement with the statement “I would choose to train at the same site again, “is 4.2 on a scale where 1 is strongly disagree and 5 is strongly agree. This is about the same as the average reported last year.

Demographic Analysis

Gender

Figure 1: Gender Distribution, 2026



Note: In the 'Other' category, one respondent selected 'Genderqueer' and 1 respondent selected ' Non-Binary.'

Figure 2: Percent Female, 2021-2026

This figure showcases a continual increase in the percentage of female graduates of GME programs in Georgia during the time period.

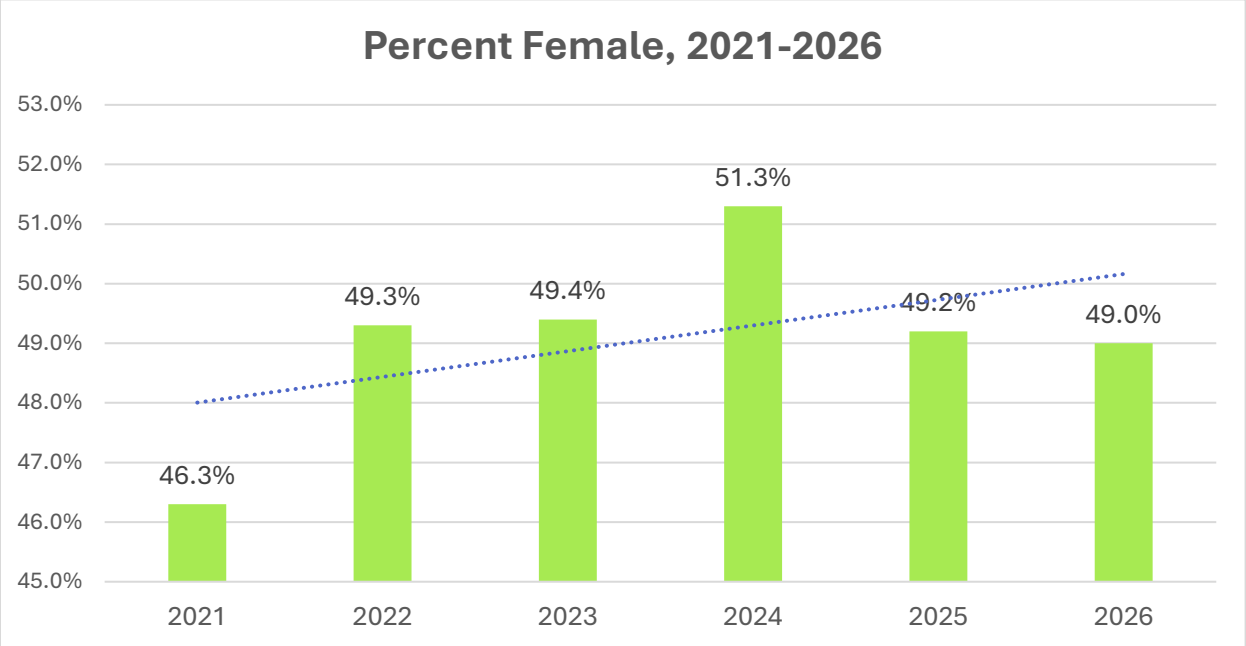


Table 2: Specialties by Gender, 2026

Specialty Completed in 2026	Female		Male		Total	Percent
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent		
Internal Medicine	125	48.3%	134	51.7%	259	28.0%
Family Medicine	71	59.2%	49	40.8%	120	13.0%
Pediatrics	30	69.8%	13	30.2%	43	4.7%
Emergency Medicine	24	51.1%	23	48.9%	47	5.1%
Obstetrics and Gynecology	24	82.8%	5	17.2%	29	3.1%
Psychiatry	22	53.7%	19	46.3%	41	4.4%
Surgery	13	34.2%	25	65.8%	38	4.1%
Primary Care/Core Subtotal	**309**	**53.6%**	**268**	**46.4%**	**577**	**62.4%**
All Other Specialties	**145**	**119.4%**	**202**	**180.6%**	**414**	**37.6%**
Total	**454**	**49%**	**470**	**51%**	**924**	**100%**

Race and Ethnicity

Figure 3 (next page) shows a predominance of white and Asian/Pacific Islander respondents, representation from black/African American respondents, and smaller contributions from other racial and ethnic groups. Figure 4 indicates that the percent of respondents identifying as black has increased since 2021, while the percent of respondents identifying as Hispanic has shown a stable to declining percentage since 2021.

Figure 3: Racial Distribution, 2026

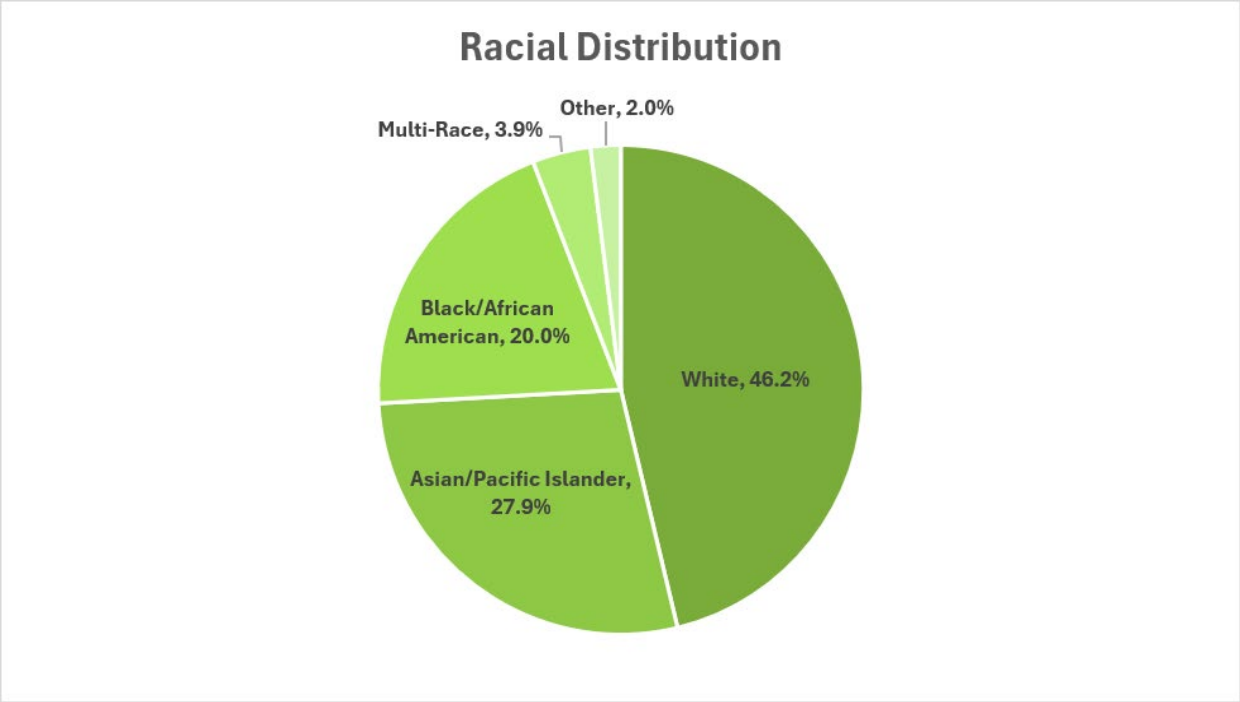
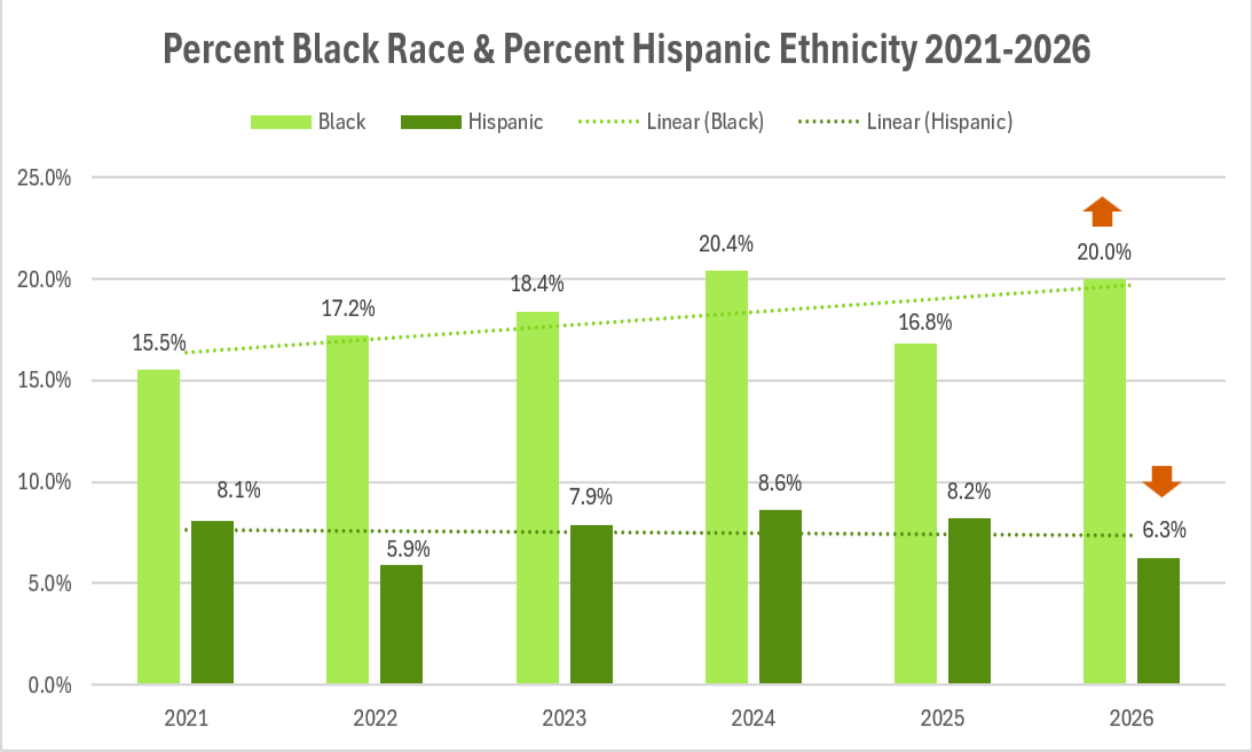


Figure 4: Percent Black Race & Percent Hispanic Ethnicity, 2021-2026



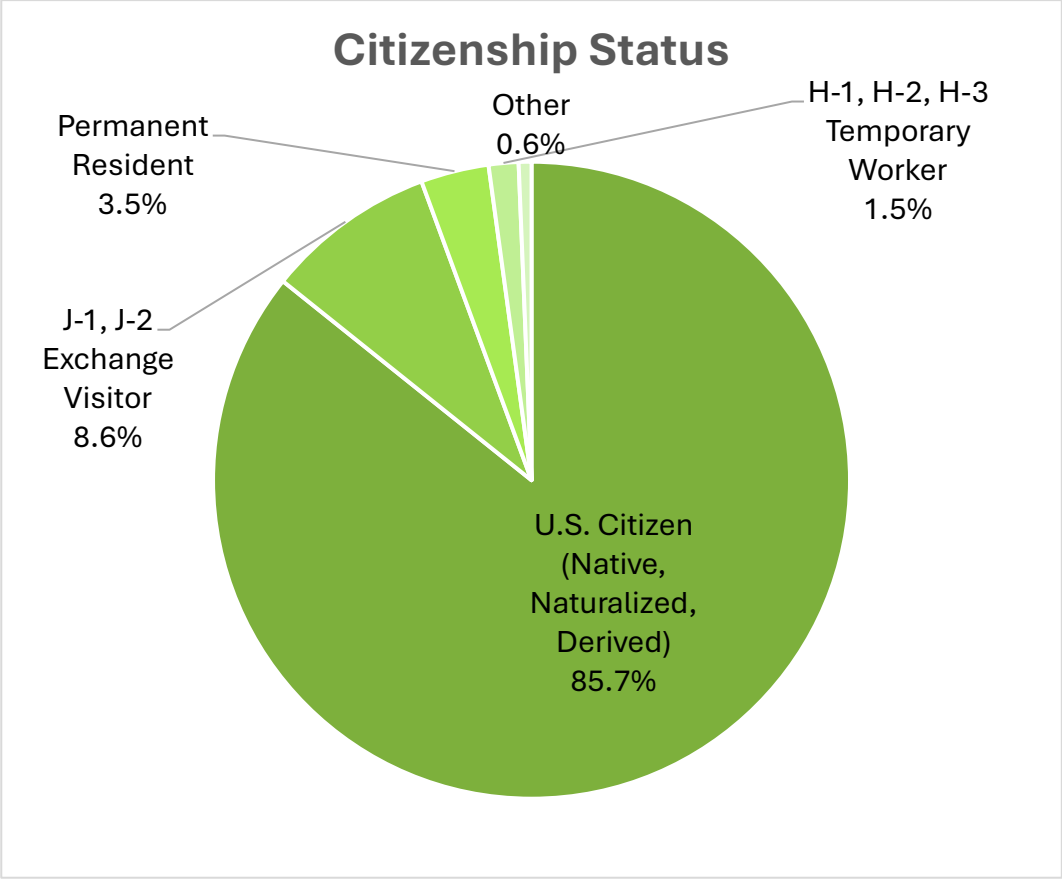
Citizenship Distribution

Table 3 and Figure 5 show that most graduates are U.S. citizens. There is also a notable number of graduates, around 14.0%, who are non-citizens or hold temporary statuses.

Table 3: Citizenship Distribution, 2026

Citizenship Status	Frequency	Percent
U.S. Citizen (Native, Naturalized, Derived)	794	85.7%
J-1, J-2 Exchange Visitor	80	8.6%
Permanent Resident	32	3.5%
H-1, H-2, H-3 Temporary Worker	14	1.5%
Other	6	0.6%
Total	**926**	**100.0%**

Figure 5: Citizenship Status, 2026



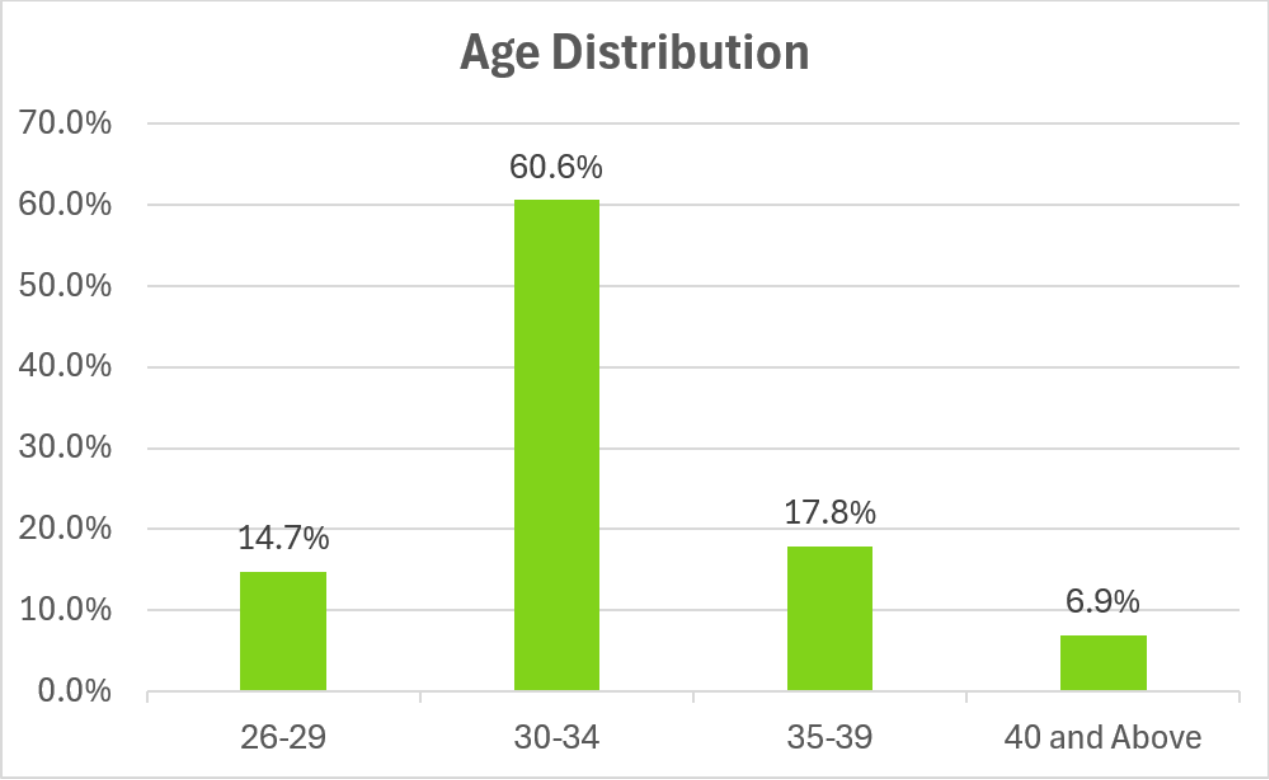
Age Distribution

Table 4 presents the age distribution of respondents, highlighting a concentration of graduates in their early 30s, with around 25.0% being older than 35.

Table 4: Age Distribution, 2026

Age Group	Frequency	Percent
26-29	136	14.7%
30-34	561	60.6%
35-39	165	17.8%
40 and above	64	6.9%
Total	**926**	**100.0%**

Figure 6: Age Distribution, 2026



Education: High School

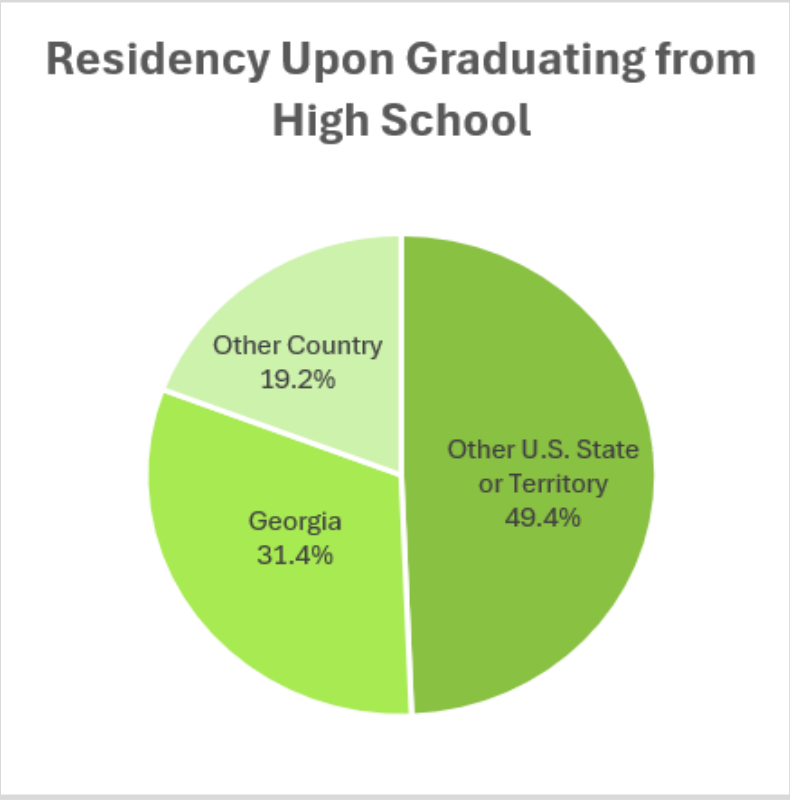
Residency Upon Graduating from High School

Table 5: Residency Upon Graduating from High School, 2026

Residency Upon Graduating from High School	Frequency	Percent
Other U.S. State or Territory	457	49.4%
Georgia	291	31.4%
Other country	178	19.2%
Total	**926**	**100.0%**

Figure 7: Residency Upon Graduating from High School, 2026

The Figure below demonstrates that nearly half of this year's GME graduates completed their high school education in another U.S. state or territory. This distribution indicates that Georgia's GME system relies on out-of-state graduates to fill GME training slots. This finding may reflect the importance of attracting and retaining individuals who receive their secondary education outside of Georgia and subsequently pursue medical training and practice within the state.



Location of High School and Plans to Remain in State After Graduation

Figures 8 and 9 provide an overview of both Georgia and non-Georgia high school graduates (respectively) who are planning to remain in Georgia after graduation. Figure 8 shows an overall increase in the percentage of GME graduates who went to high school in Georgia and plan to practice in state after graduation since 2021. Figure 9 shows a small decline in the percentage of non-Georgia high school graduates planning to stay in state after graduation since 2021.

Figure 8: Percent of Georgia High School Graduates Planning to Remain in State After Graduation, 2021-2026

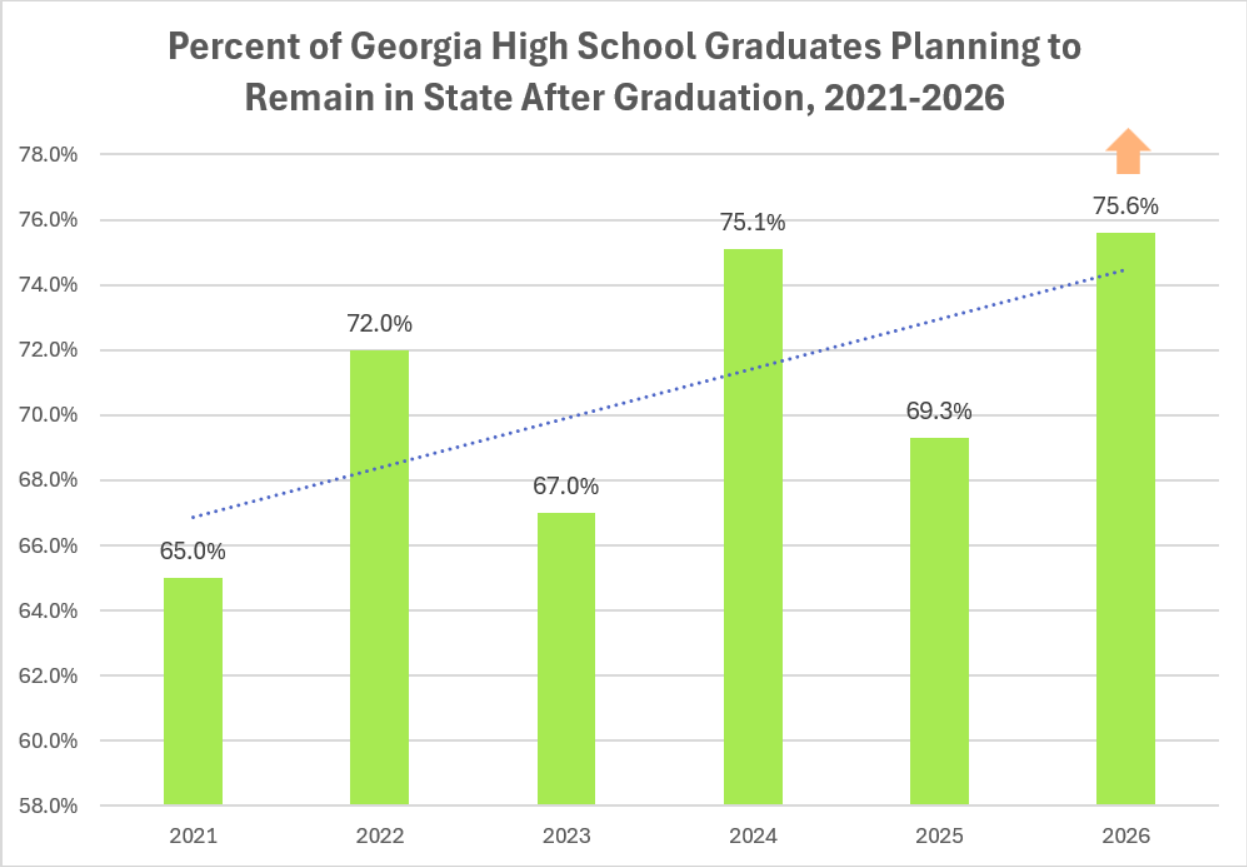
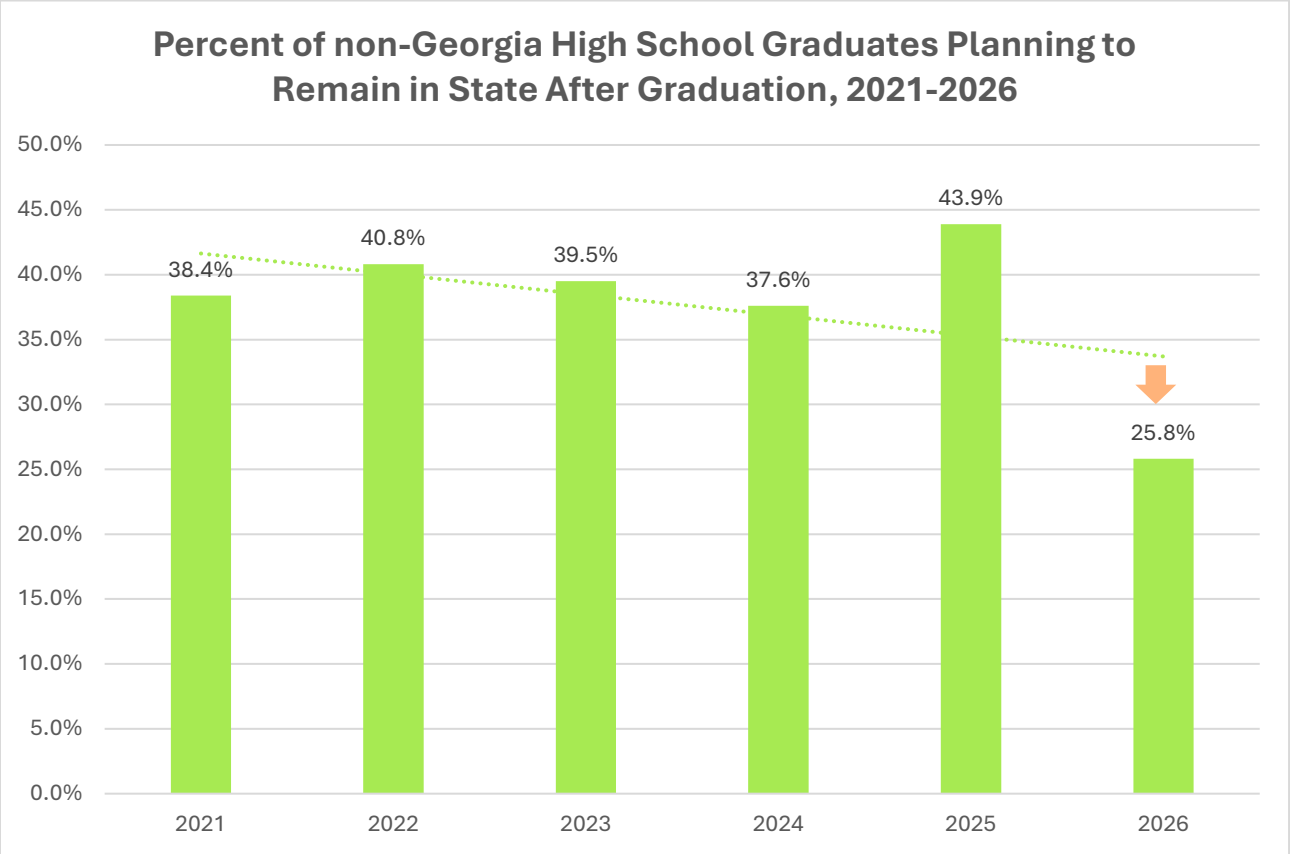


Figure 9: Percent of non-Georgia High School Graduates Planning to Remain in State After Graduation, 2021-2026



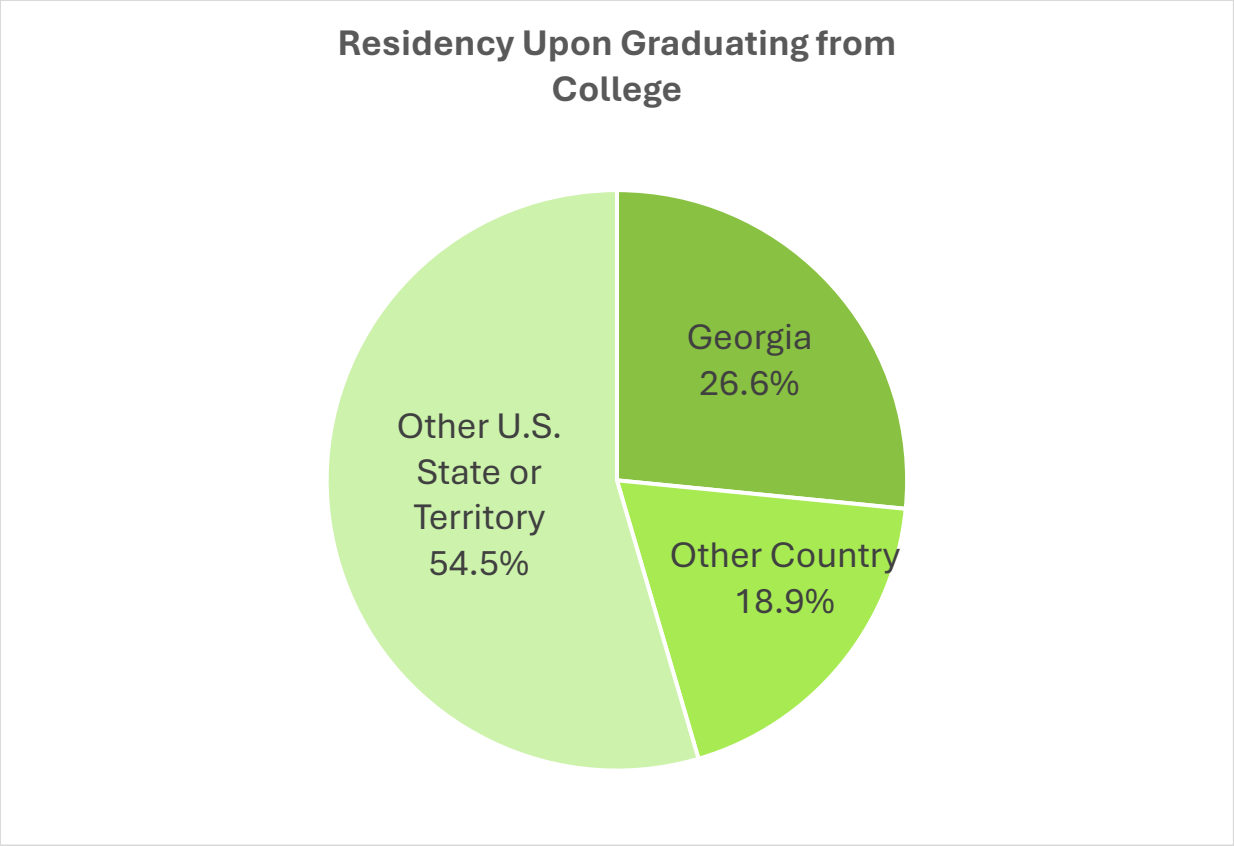
Education: College/Undergraduate Education

Residency Upon Graduating from College

Table 6: Residency Upon Graduating from College, 2026

Residency Upon Graduating from College	Frequency	Percent
Georgia	246	26.6%
Other Country	175	18.9%
Other U.S. State or Territory	505	54.5%
Total	**926**	**100.0%**

Figure 10: Residency Upon Graduating from College, 2026



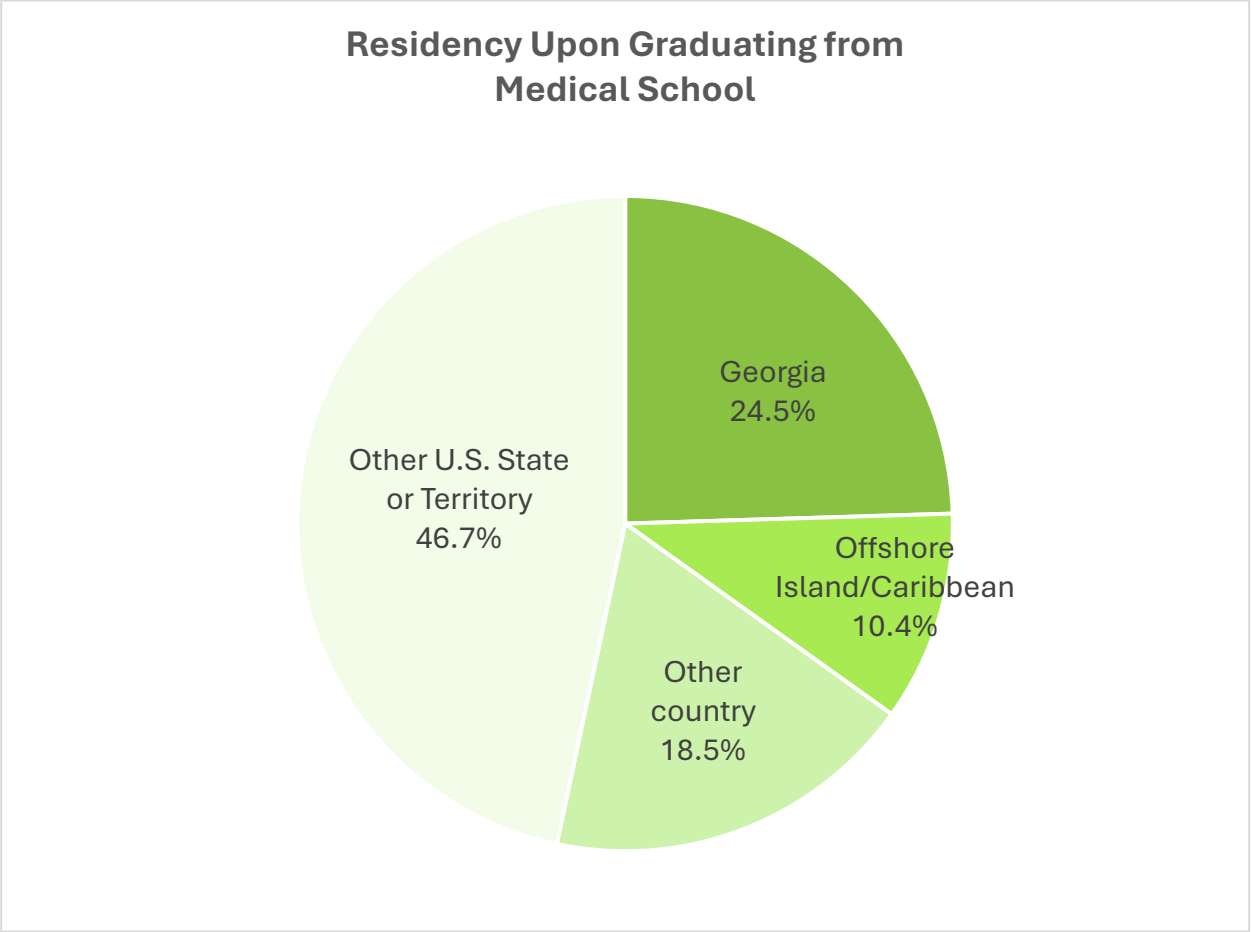
Education: Medical School

Residency Upon Graduating from Medical School

Table 7: Residency Upon Graduating from Medical School, 2026

Residency Upon Graduating from Medical School	Frequency	Percent
Georgia	227	24.5%
Offshore Island/Caribbean	96	10.4%
Other Country	171	18.5%
Other U.S. State or Territory	432	46.7%
Total	**926**	**100.0%**

Figure 11: Residency Upon Graduating from Medical School, 2026



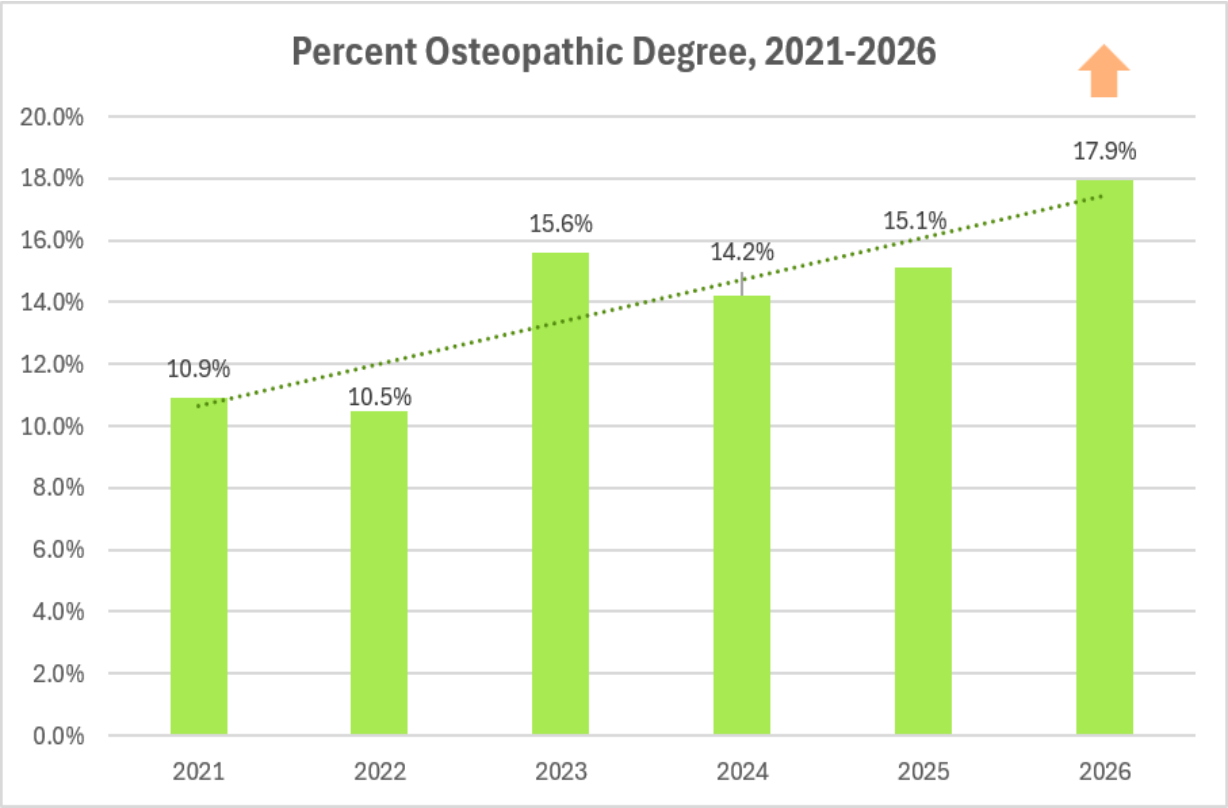
Medical Degree Type

Table 8: Degree Type, 2026

Degree Type	Frequency	Percent
Allopathic (M.D.)	760	82.1%
Osteopathic (D.O.)	166	17.9%
Total	**926**	100.0%

Figure 12: Percent Osteopathic Degree, 2021-2026

Figure 12 presents the percentage of respondents who reported completing an osteopathic medical degree between 2021 and 2026. Over the past six years, the data indicate an upward trend in the rate of graduates obtaining an osteopathic degree.



Graduated from a Georgia Medical School

Figure 13 shows that the percentage of Georgia GME graduates who report graduating from a Georgia medical school shows a modest upward trend during the period 2021 to 2026.

Figure 13: Percent of GME Graduates who Graduated from a Georgia Medical School, 2021-2026

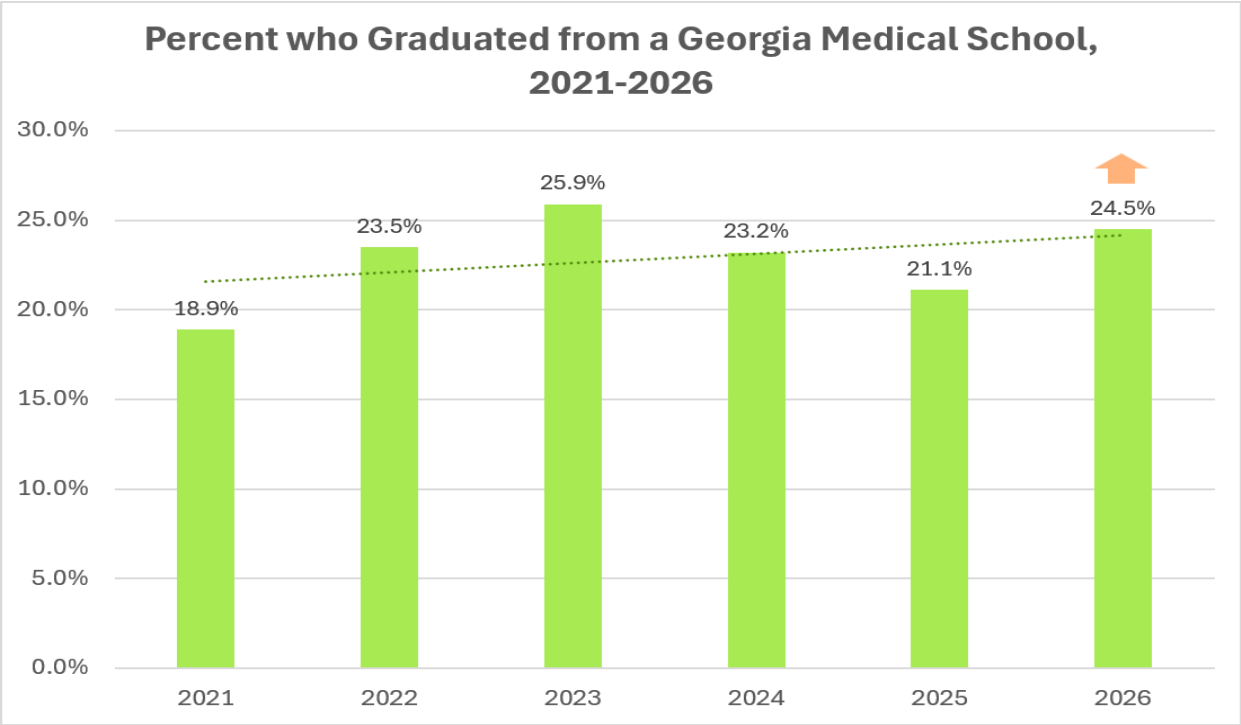
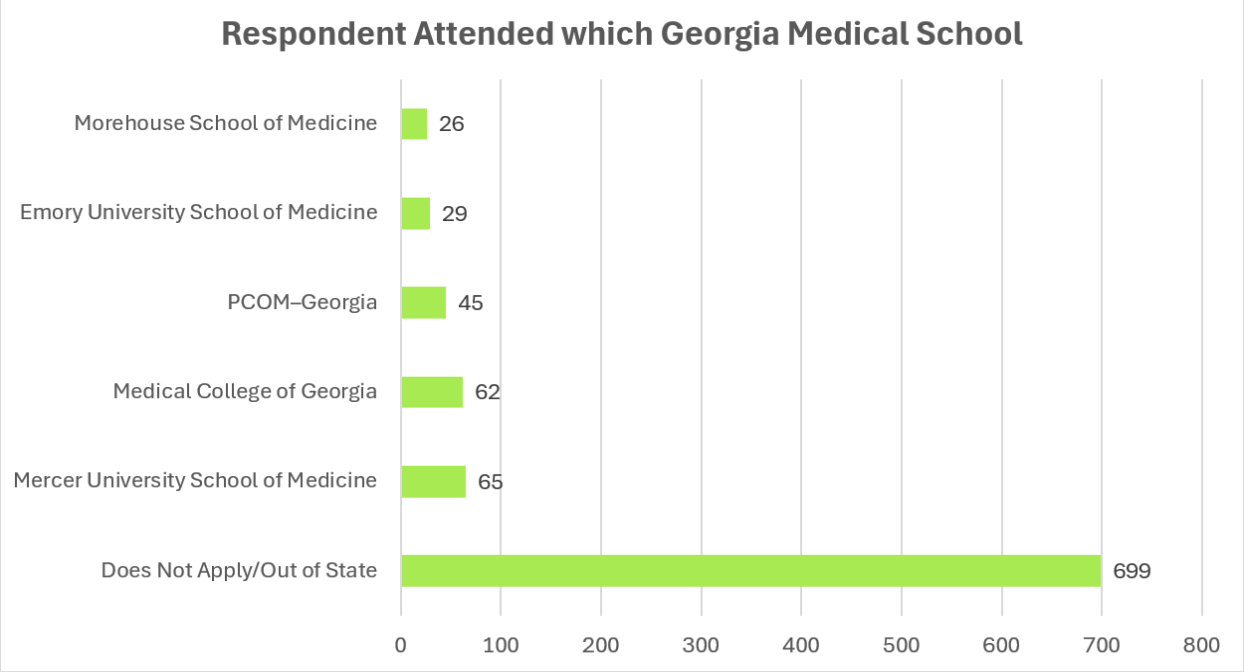


Figure 14: Respondent Attended Which Georgia Medical School, 2026



Location of Medical School and Plans to Remain in State After Graduation

Figures 15 and 16 highlight the percentage of both Georgia and non-Georgia medical school graduates (respectively) who are planning to remain in Georgia after graduation. Figure 15 shows variation from year to year, but the line of best fit indicates that, during the time period 2021 to 2026, the percentage of Georgia medical school graduates planning to stay in state after GME graduation is increasing.

Figure 15: Percent of Georgia Medical School Graduates Planning to Remain In-State after Graduation, 2021-2026

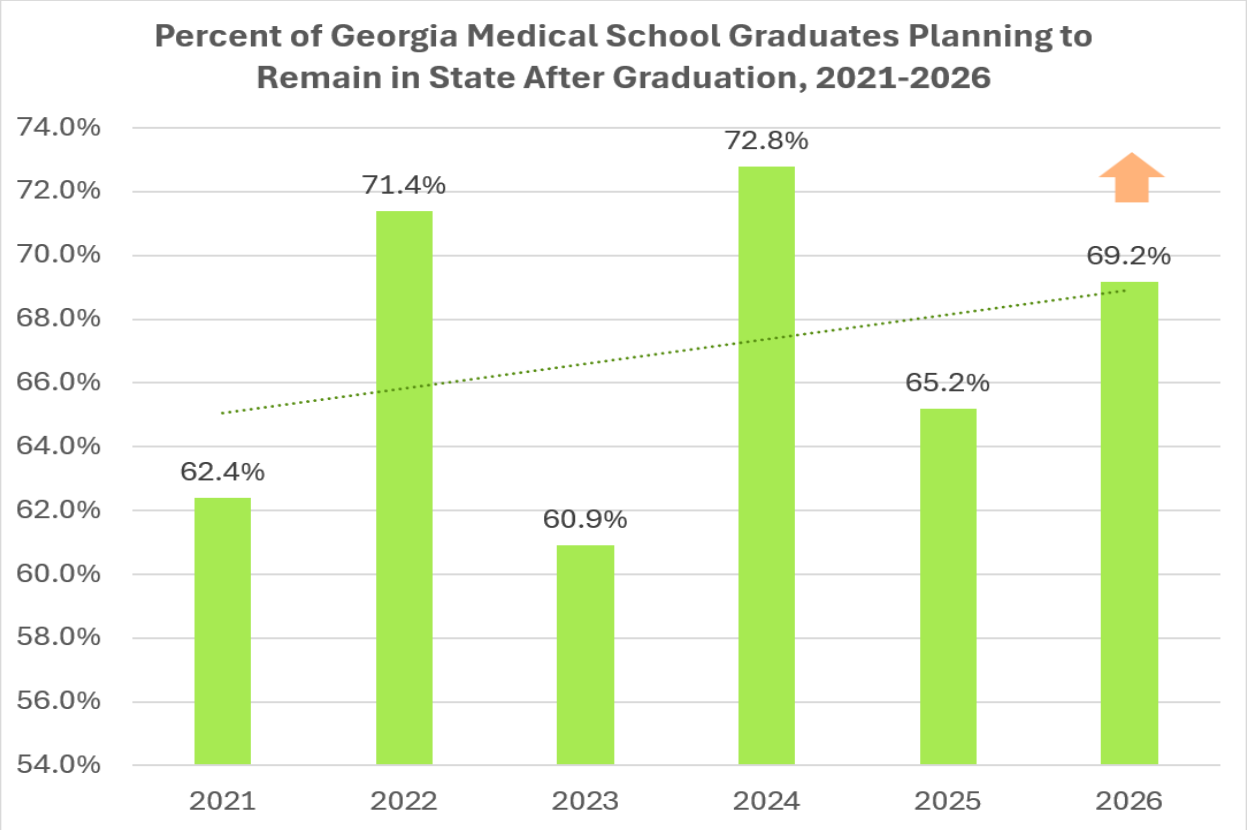
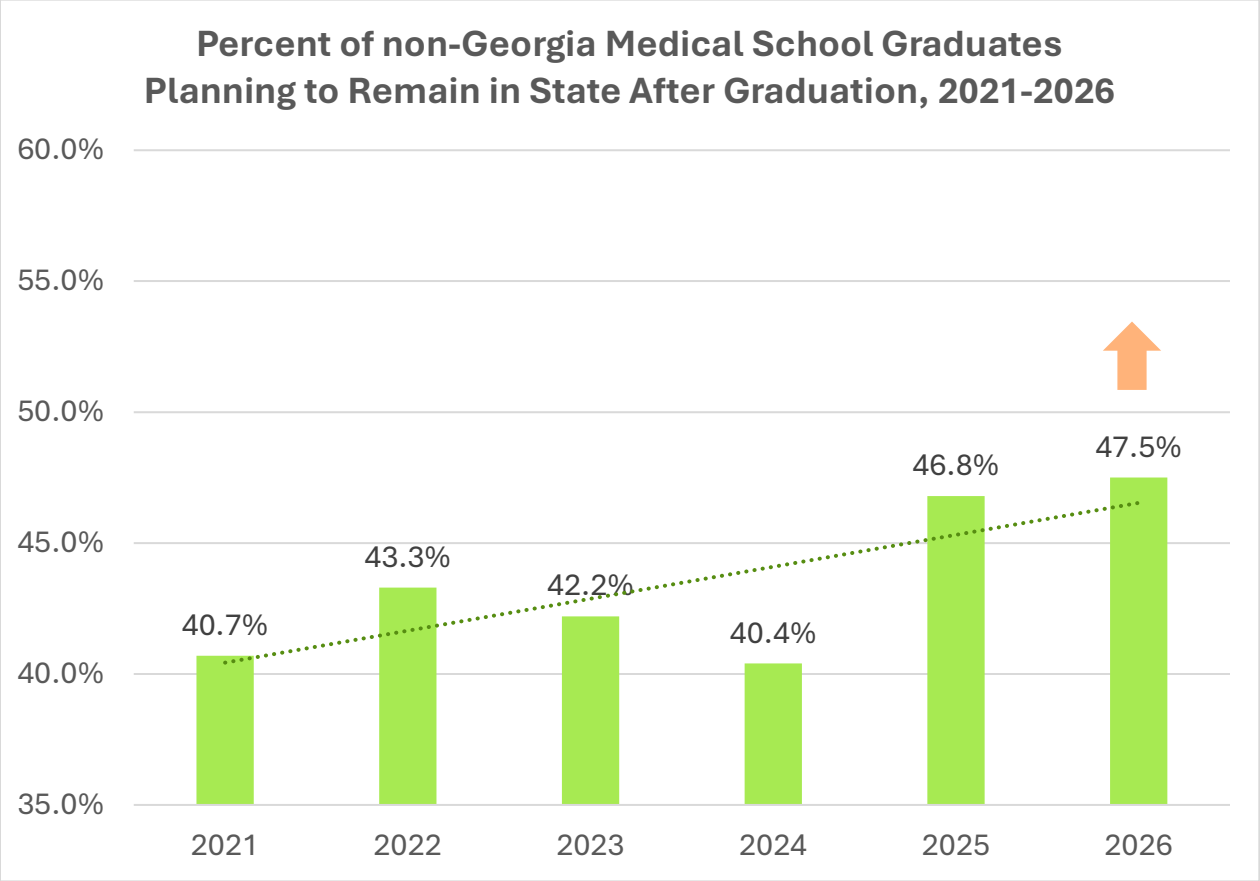
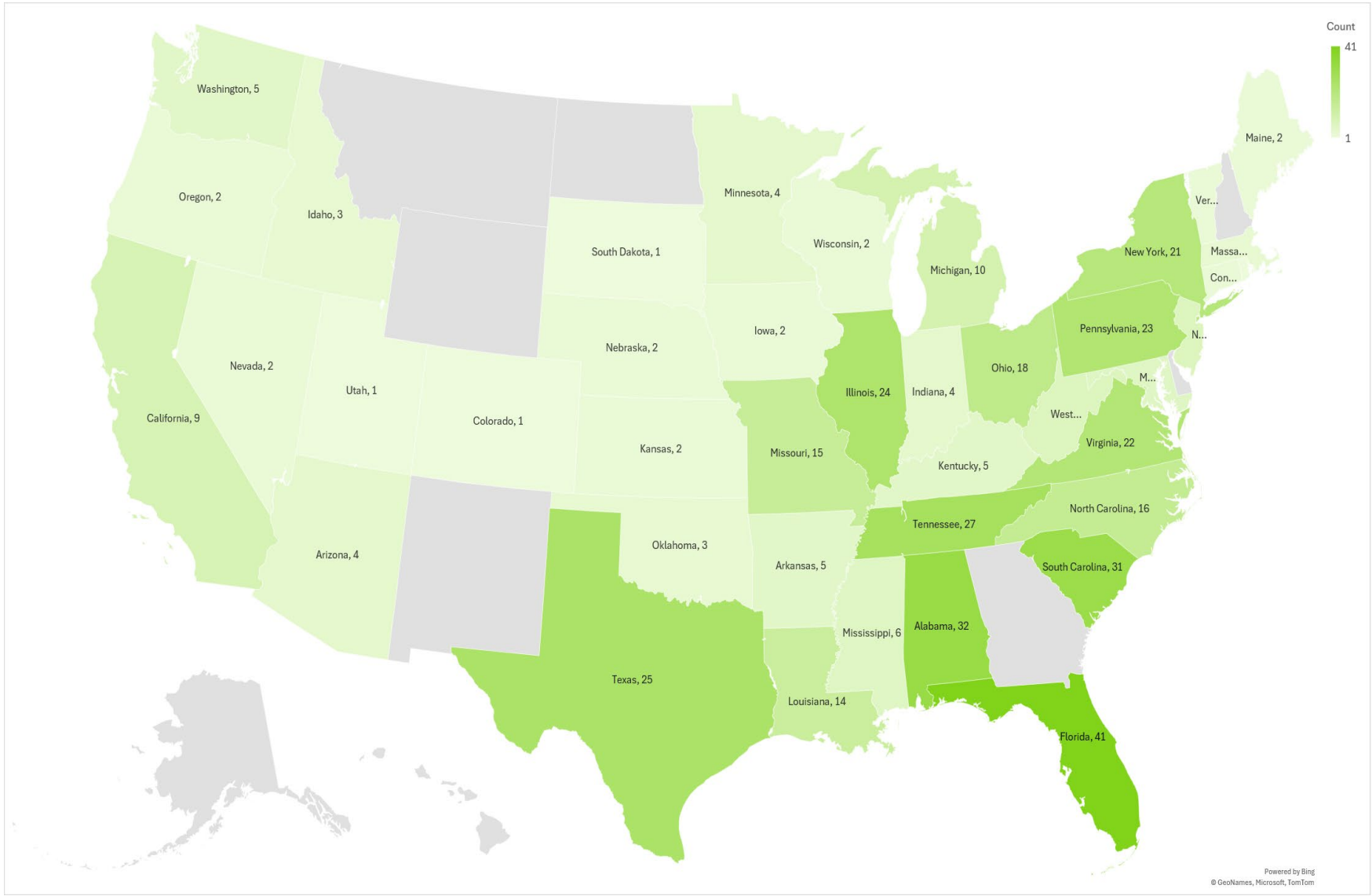


Figure 16: Percent of non-Georgia Medical School Graduates Planning to Remain In-State after Graduation, 2021-2025



Map 1: Respondents' Out-of-State Medical School Locations, 2026



Specialty and Intended Practice Location by Medical School Location

Table 9 and Figures 17 through 23 provide an overview of the location of medical schools attended by respondents, their specialties, and their planned practice locations.

Table 9: Medical School Location: Specialties of Graduates and Intended Practice Location, 2026

Specialty	Total Graduates	Medical School Location				Plans after Graduation		
		Georgia	Other State	Offshore/ Caribbean	Other Country	Staying in Georgia	Going out of State	Going out of the Country
Emergency Medicine	48	15	28	3	2	25	21	2
Family Medicine	120	40	29	33	18	79	40	1
Internal Medicine	259	60	77	37	85	157	100	2
Obstetrics and Gynecology	29	12	17	0	0	9	20	0
Pediatrics	43	17	17	2	7	23	20	0
Preventive Medicine	4	2	2	0	0	4	0	0
Psychiatry	42	10	24	5	3	24	18	0
Surgery	38	15	15	2	6	14	23	1
Primary Care/Core Subtotal	**583**	**171**	**209**	**82**	**121**	**335**	**242**	**6**
All Other Specialties	343	56	223	14	50	154	186	3
Grand Total	**926**	**227**	**432**	**96**	**171**	**489**	**428**	**9**

Figure 17: Medical School Location of Internal Medicine Graduates, 2026

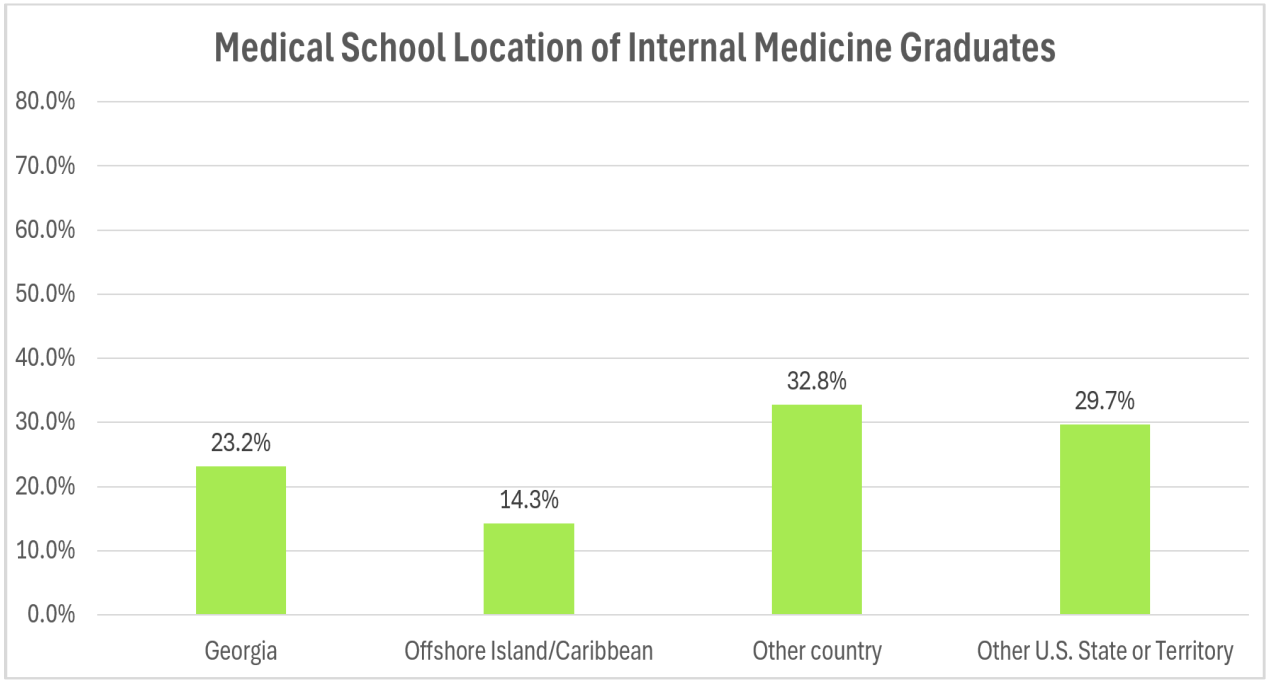


Figure 18: Medical School Location of Family Medicine Graduates, 2026

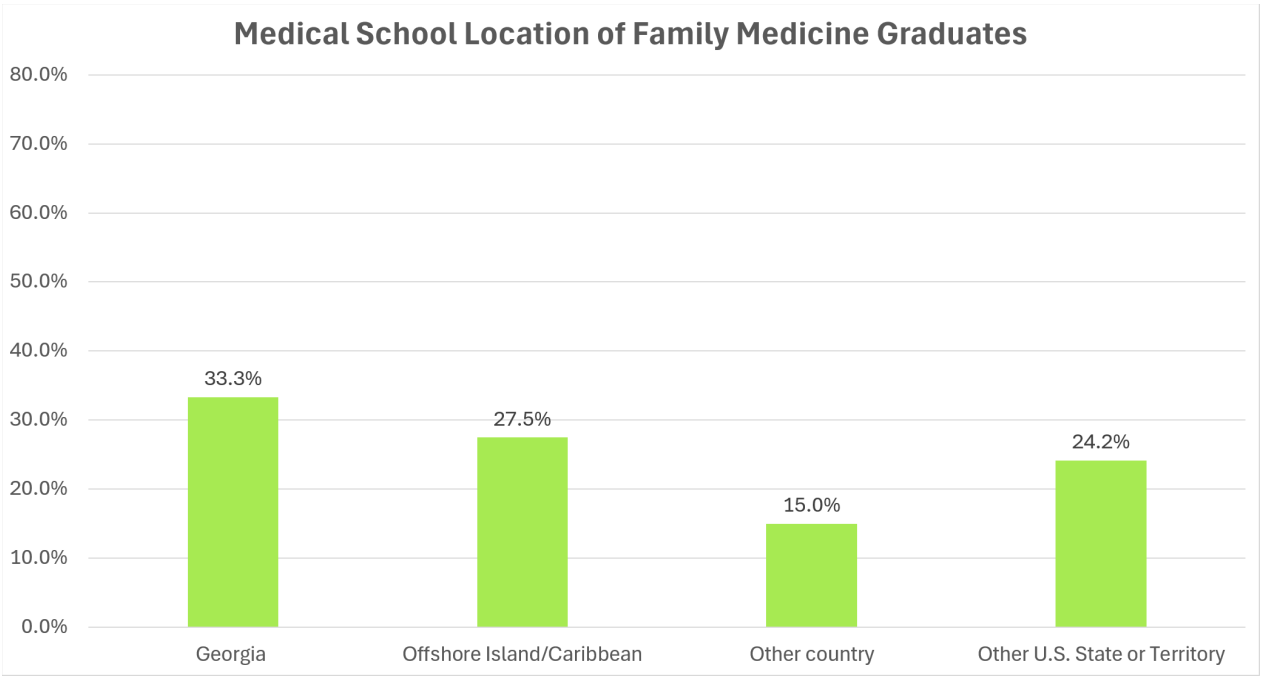


Figure 19: Medical School Location of Emergency Medicine Graduates, 2026

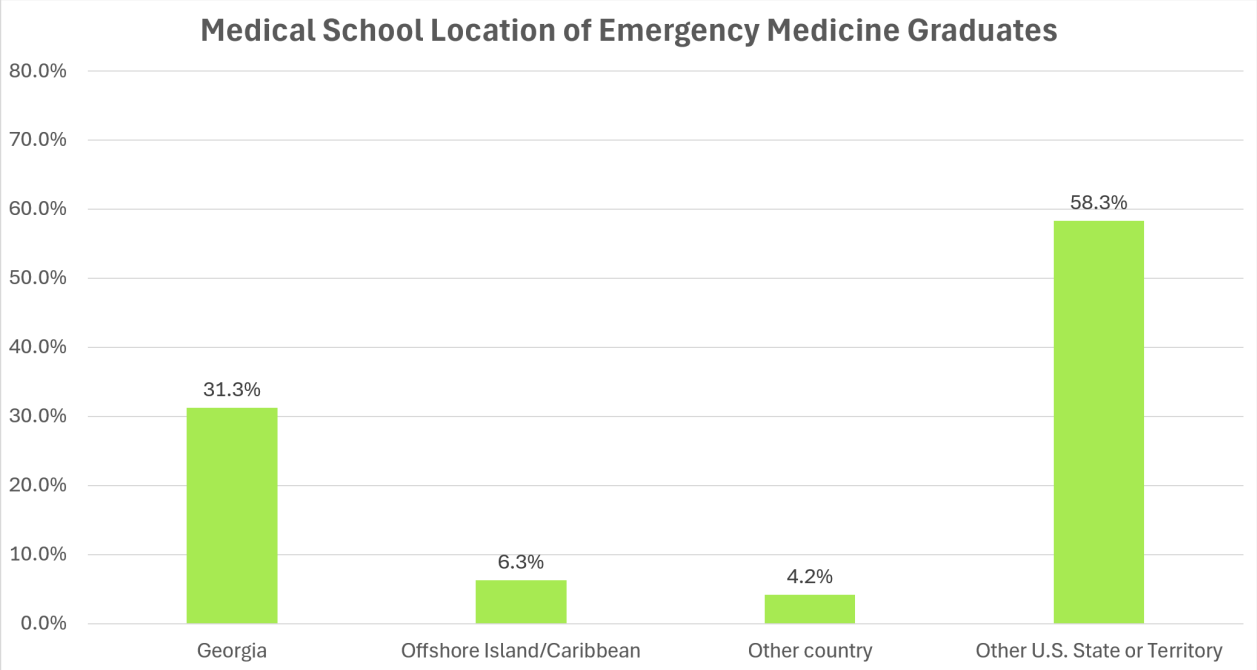


Figure 20: Medical School Location of Pediatrics Graduates, 2026

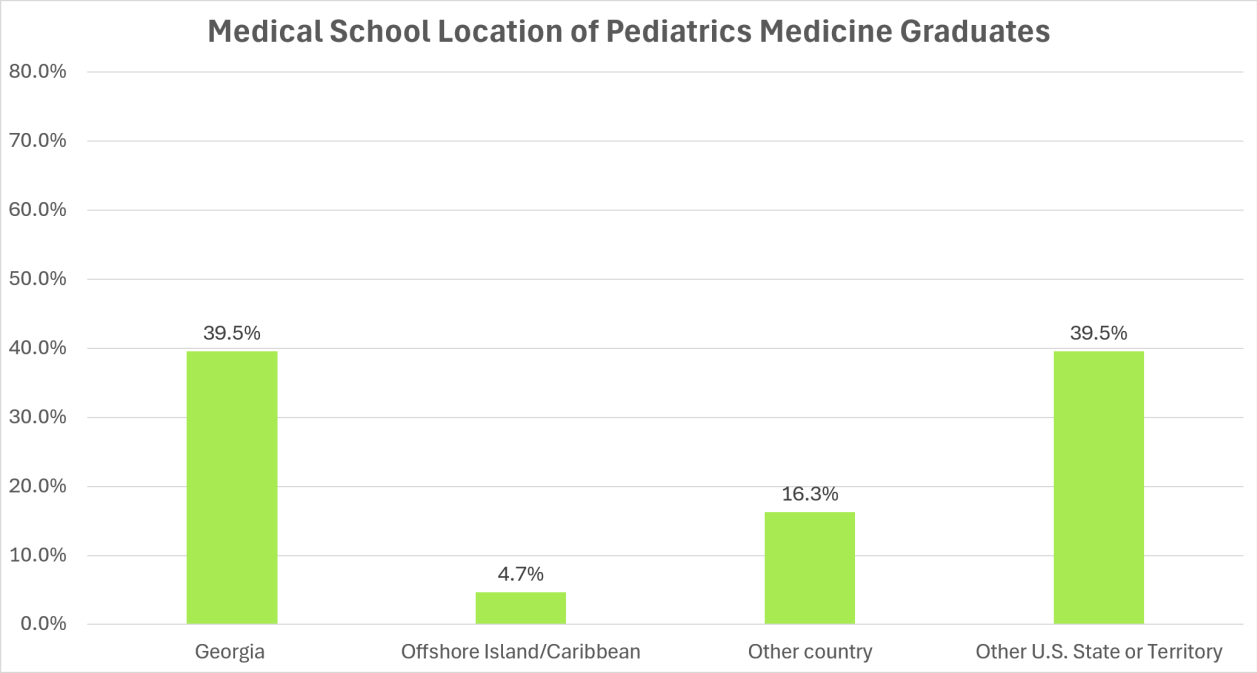


Figure 21: Medical School Location of General Surgery Graduates, 2026

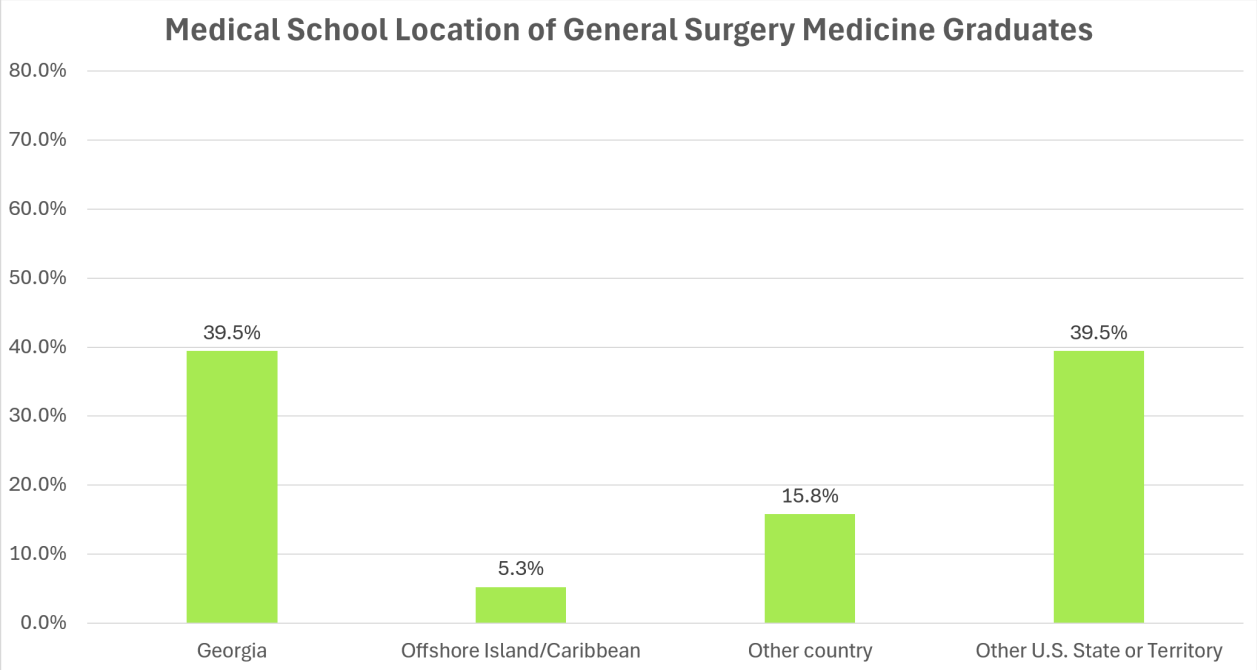


Figure 22: Medical School Location of Obstetrics & Gynecology Graduates, 2026

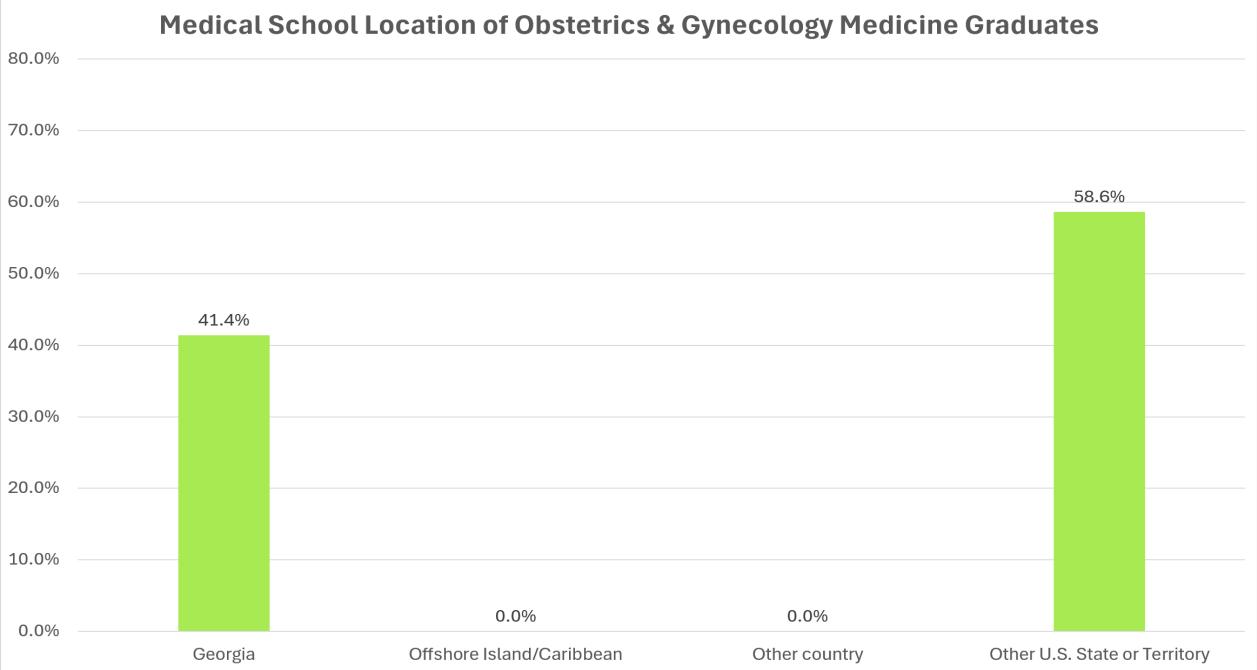
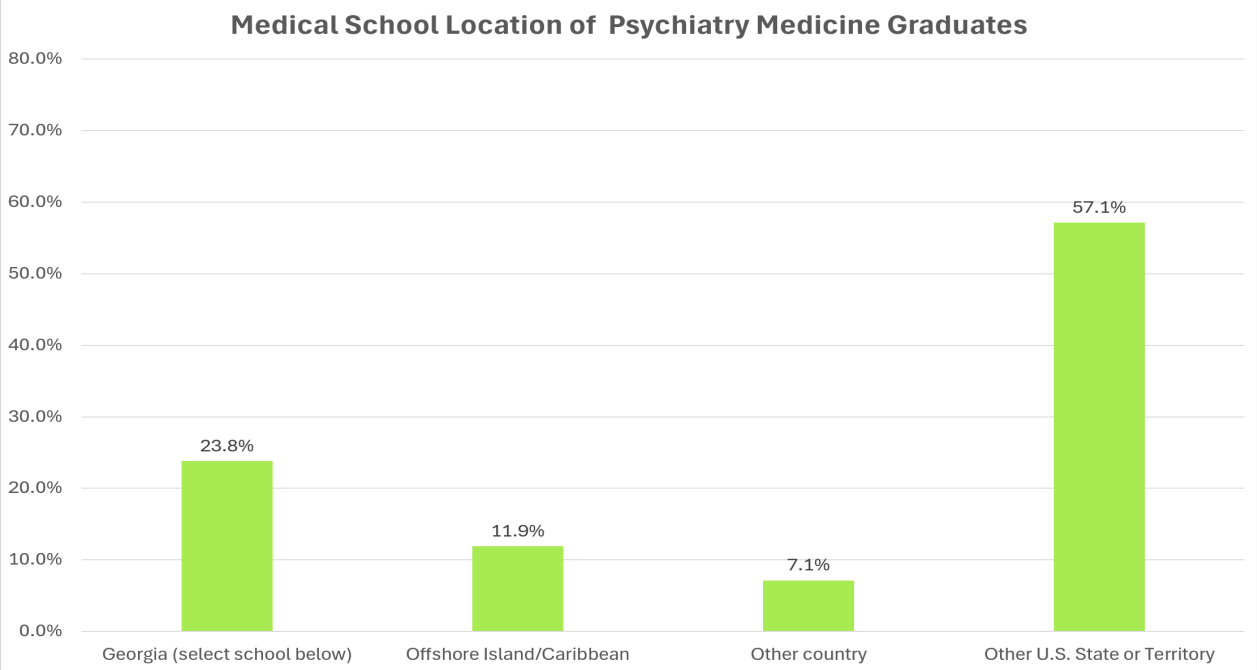


Figure 23: Medical School Location of Psychiatry Graduates, 2026



Specialties of Medical School Graduates Planning to Stay in Georgia Versus Those Planning to Practice Out-of-State

Figures 24 through 27 break out this year's Georgia GME Exit Survey respondents by where they completed medical school: Georgia, other U.S. States, other countries, and offshore/Caribbean, respectively. The figures show total graduates and the number intending to remain in Georgia or go out of state to practice by the specialty they're completing in 2026.

Figure 24: Specialties of Georgia Medical School Graduates Planning to Stay in Georgia versus those Planning to Practice Out of State, 2026

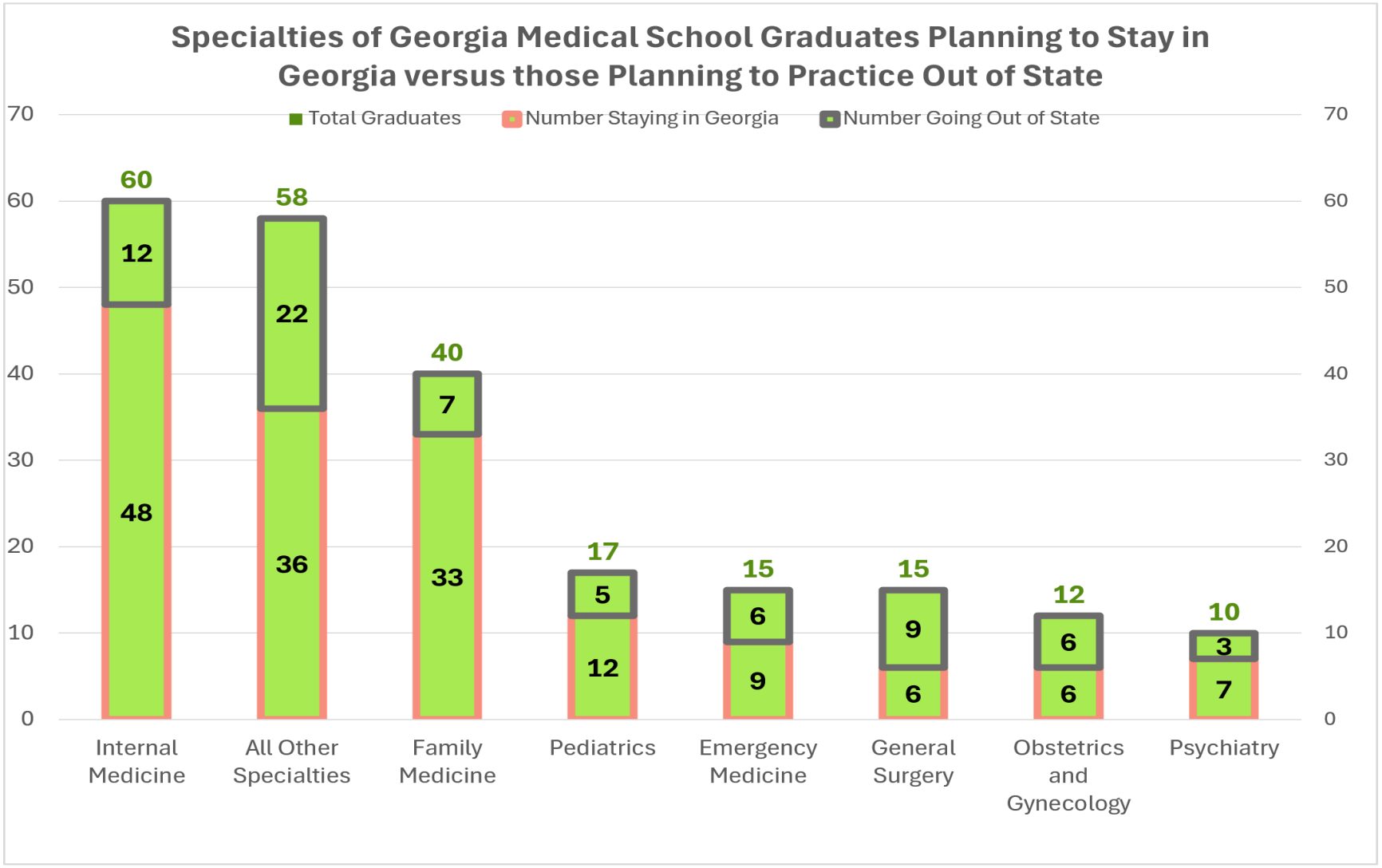


Figure 25: Specialties of other U.S. States Medical School Graduates Planning to Stay in Georgia versus those Planning to Practice Out of State, 2026

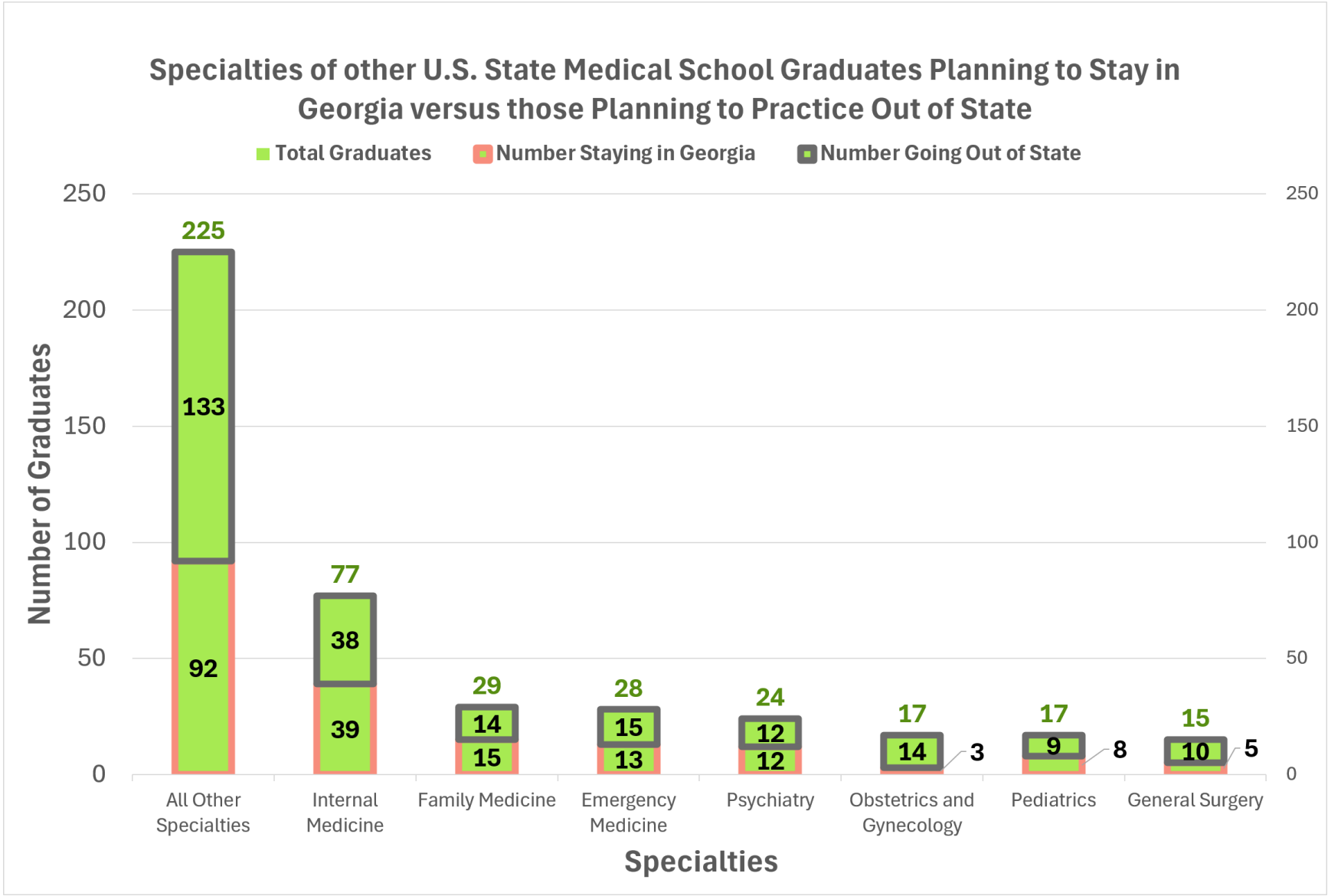


Figure 26: Specialties of Offshore/Caribbean Medical School Graduates Planning to Stay in Georgia versus those Planning to Practice Out of State, 2026

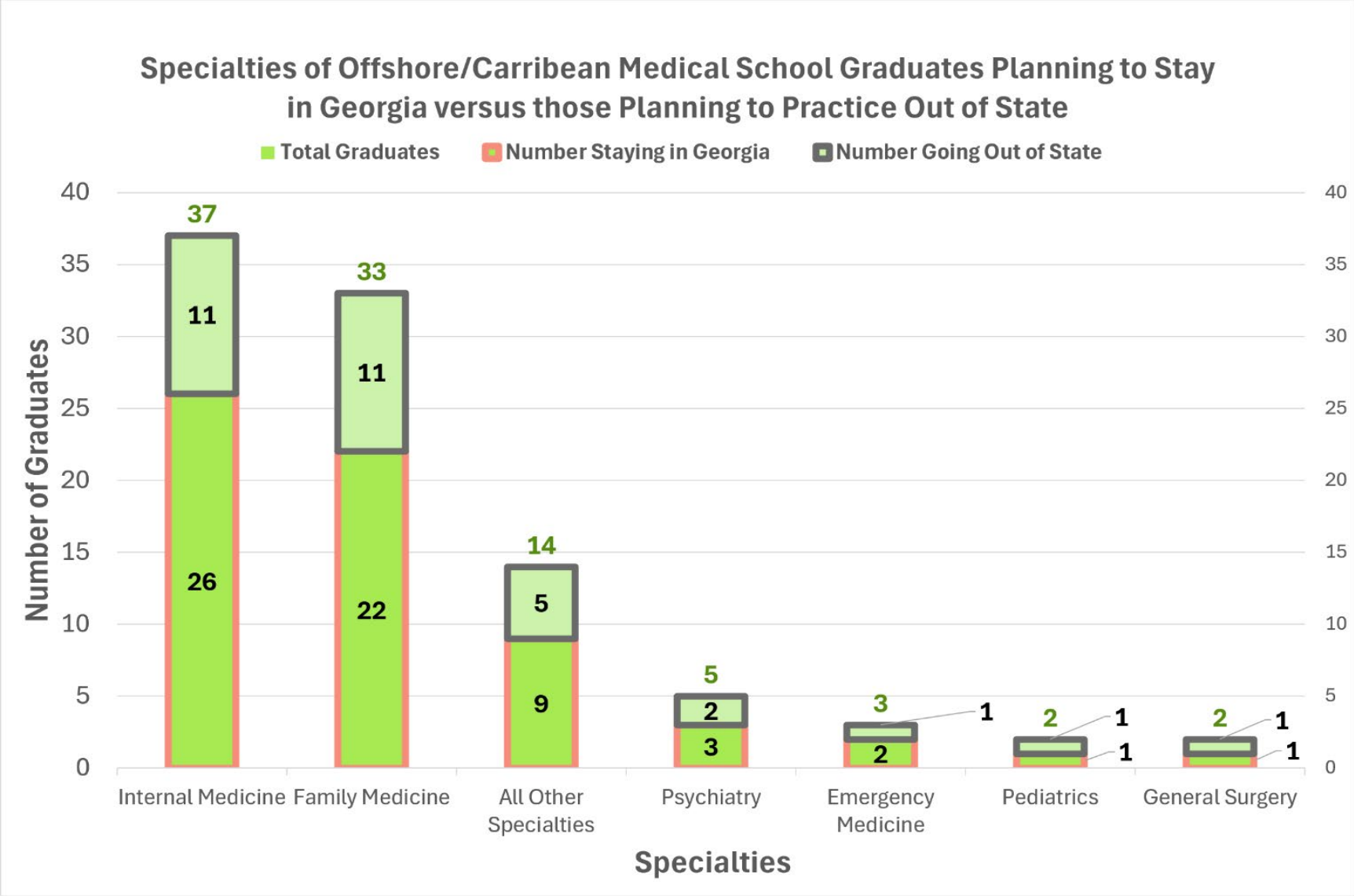
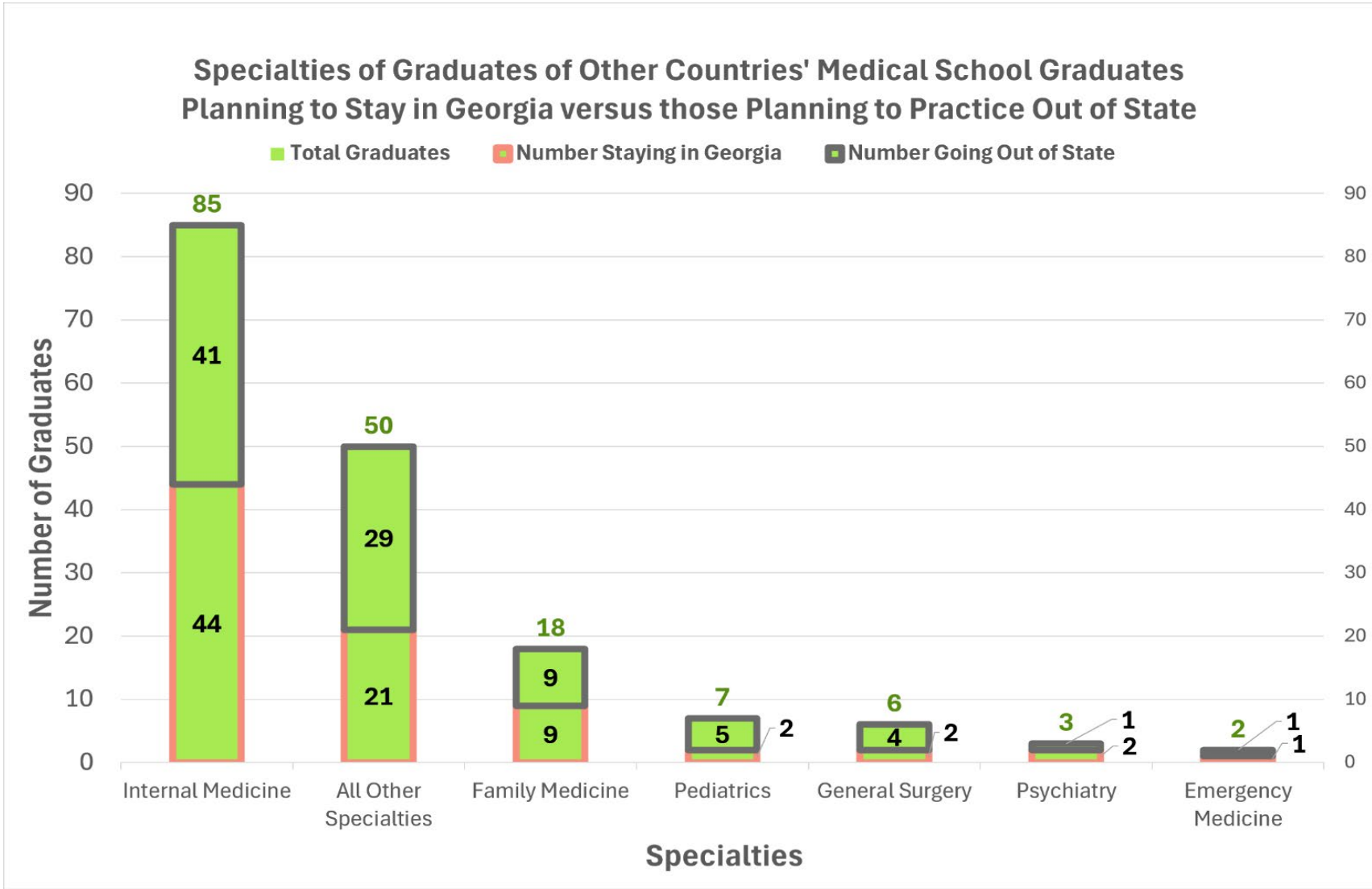


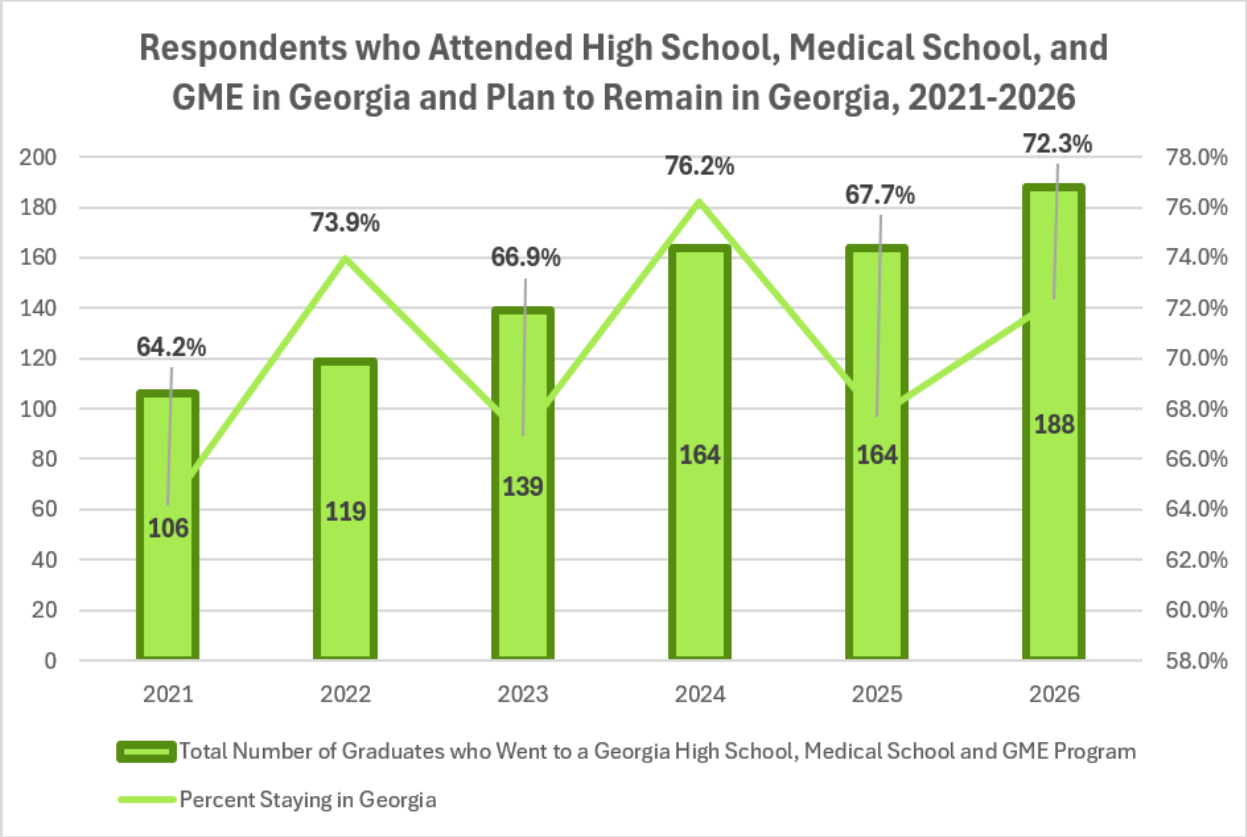
Figure 27: Specialties of Other Countries' Medical School Graduates Planning to Stay in Georgia versus those Planning to Practice Out of State, 2026



Respondents who Graduated from High School, Medical School, and GME in Georgia and Plan to Stay in Georgia after Graduation

Figure 28 displays the yearly trend in the number of respondents planning to stay in Georgia after graduation, for those who attended high school, medical school, and GME in Georgia, from 2021 to 2025. Overall, this Figure shows that the total number of graduates who did all their education in Georgia is increasing, while the percent of them staying in Georgia after graduation varies by year.

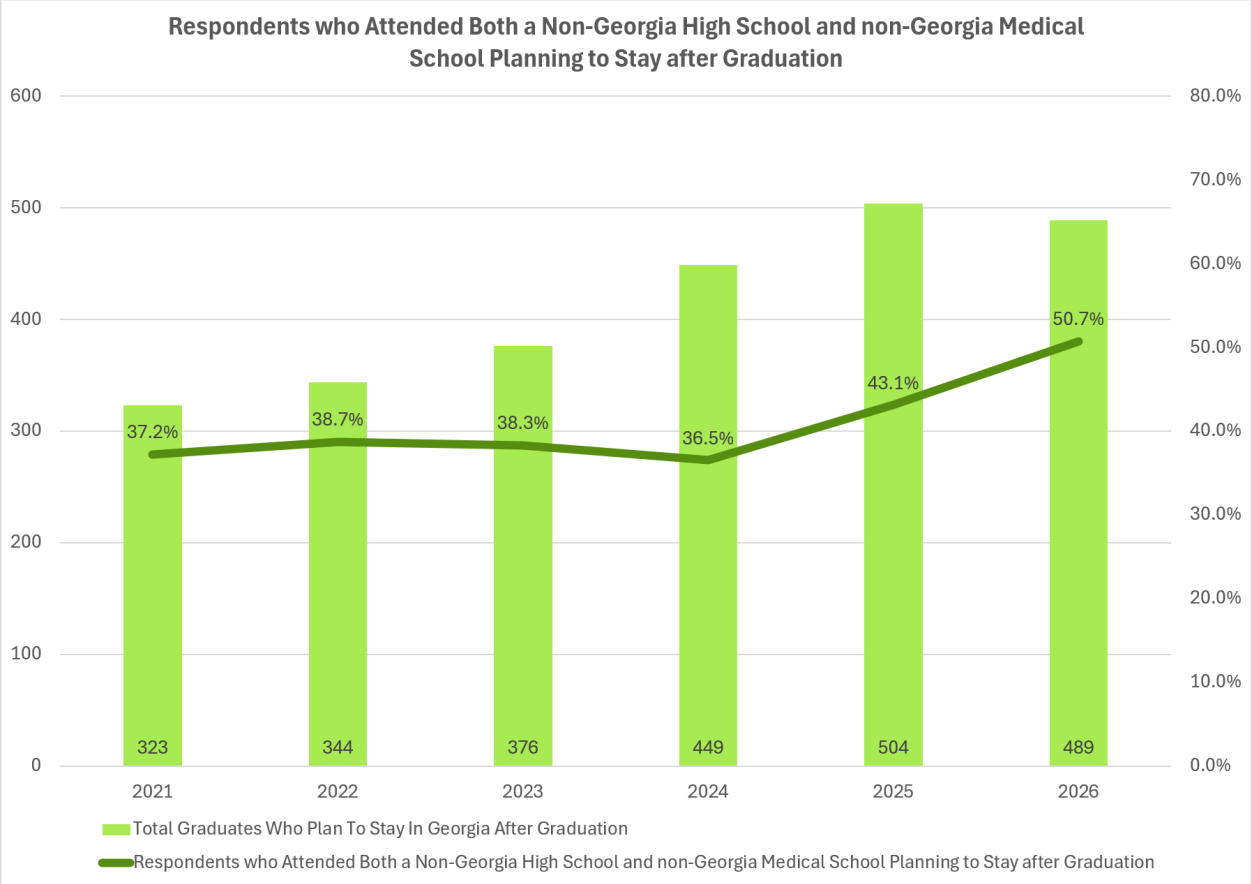
Figure 28: Respondents who Attended High School, Medical School, and GME in Georgia and Plan to Remain in Georgia, 2021-2026



Respondents who Graduated from a non-Georgia High School and Medical School and Plan to Stay in Georgia after Graduation

Figure 29 displays the yearly trend from 2021 to 2026 in the number of respondents planning to stay in Georgia after graduation, for those who attended both a non-Georgia high school and a non-Georgia medical school. This group of respondents represents those who came to Georgia for their GME training (perhaps among other reasons) and intend to stay in Georgia to practice—a significant recruitment and retention indicator for Georgia's GME programs. Figure 29 shows that both the number of graduates who did not complete pre-GME education in Georgia and the percent of them planning to stay in Georgia after graduation are increasing.

Figure 29: Respondents who Attended Both a non-Georgia High School and non-Georgia Medical School Planning to Stay in Georgia, 2021-2026



Education: Resident and Fellow Distribution

Table 10 and Figures 30 and 31 present the geographic origins of respondents, both residents and fellows, based on where they attended high school and medical school across four regions: Georgia, Other U.S. States, Other Countries, and Offshore/Caribbean.

Table 10: Distribution of Residents and Fellows by Education Location, 2026

Graduate Type	Georgia		Other States		Other Country		Offshore/ Caribbean	
	High School	Medical School	High School	Medical School	High School	Medical School	High School	Medical School
Fellowship	51	32	142	146	40	41	-	14
Residency	240	195	315	286	138	130	-	82
Total	**291**	**227**	**457**	**432**	**178**	**171**	**-**	**96**

Figure 30 illustrates that the majority of residents and fellows completed their high school education in another U.S. State or Territory outside of Georgia. This distribution is consistent with the pattern observed among the 2025 graduates, indicating that out-of-state educational backgrounds continue to represent a substantial proportion of the resident and fellow population.

Figure 30: Location of High School: Residents vs Fellows

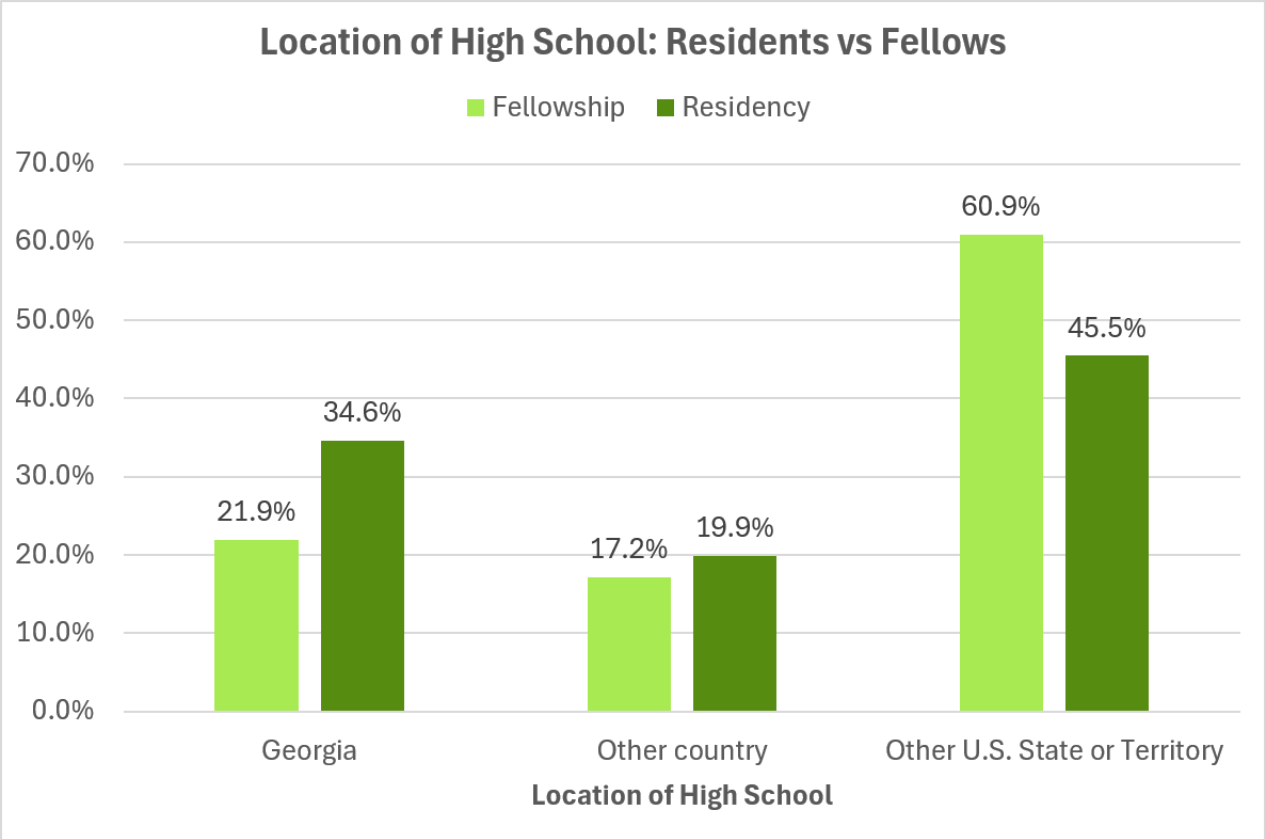
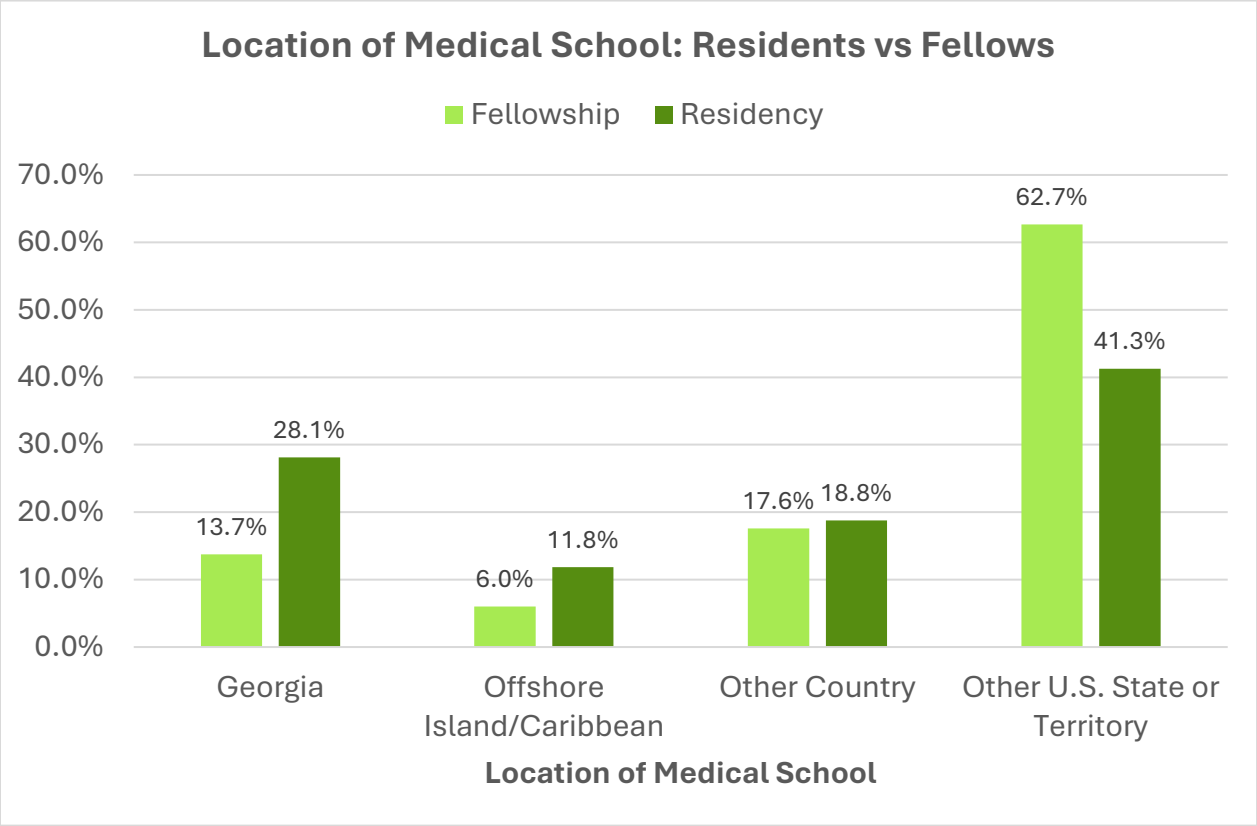


Figure 31 illustrates the differences in medical school location among graduates completing residency and fellowship programs. For both groups, the largest proportion attended medical school in another U.S. State or Territory outside of Georgia. Among residency completers, Georgia was the second most common medical school location. In contrast, among fellowship participants, the second-largest group completed medical school outside the United States. These findings indicate differences in the geographic composition of the educational pathways represented among graduates pursuing residency versus fellowship training.

Figure 31: Location of Medical School: Residents vs Fellows



Financial Information

Tables 11 and 12, along with Figures 32 through 34, provide an overview of educational debt across specialties, detailing both mean and median amounts. Figure 34 illustrates a six-year trend in the percentage of respondents reporting no educational debt.

Educational Debt

Table 11: Education Debt, 2026

Current Level of Education Debt	Frequency	Percent
$0	301	32.51%
Less than $100,000	87	9.40%
$100,000-$199,999	115	12.42%
$200,000-$299,999	158	17.06%
$300,000-$399,999	122	13.17%
$400,000-$499,999	80	8.64%
$500,000 or Greater	63	6.80%
Total	**926**	**100.00%**

Table 12: Current Level of Education Debt by Specialty, 2026

Specialty	Mean Debt ($)	Median Debt ($)
Emergency Medicine	233,202	217,500
Family Medicine	248,506	242,000
Internal Medicine	168,754	90,000
Obstetrics and Gynecology	227,862	235,000
Pediatrics	175,097	140,000
Psychiatry	272,280	268,500
General Surgery	226,020	200,500
Non-Primary/Core Specialty	160,054	127,500
Overall Average	**188,204**	**190,125**

Figure 32: Current Level of Education Debt, 2026

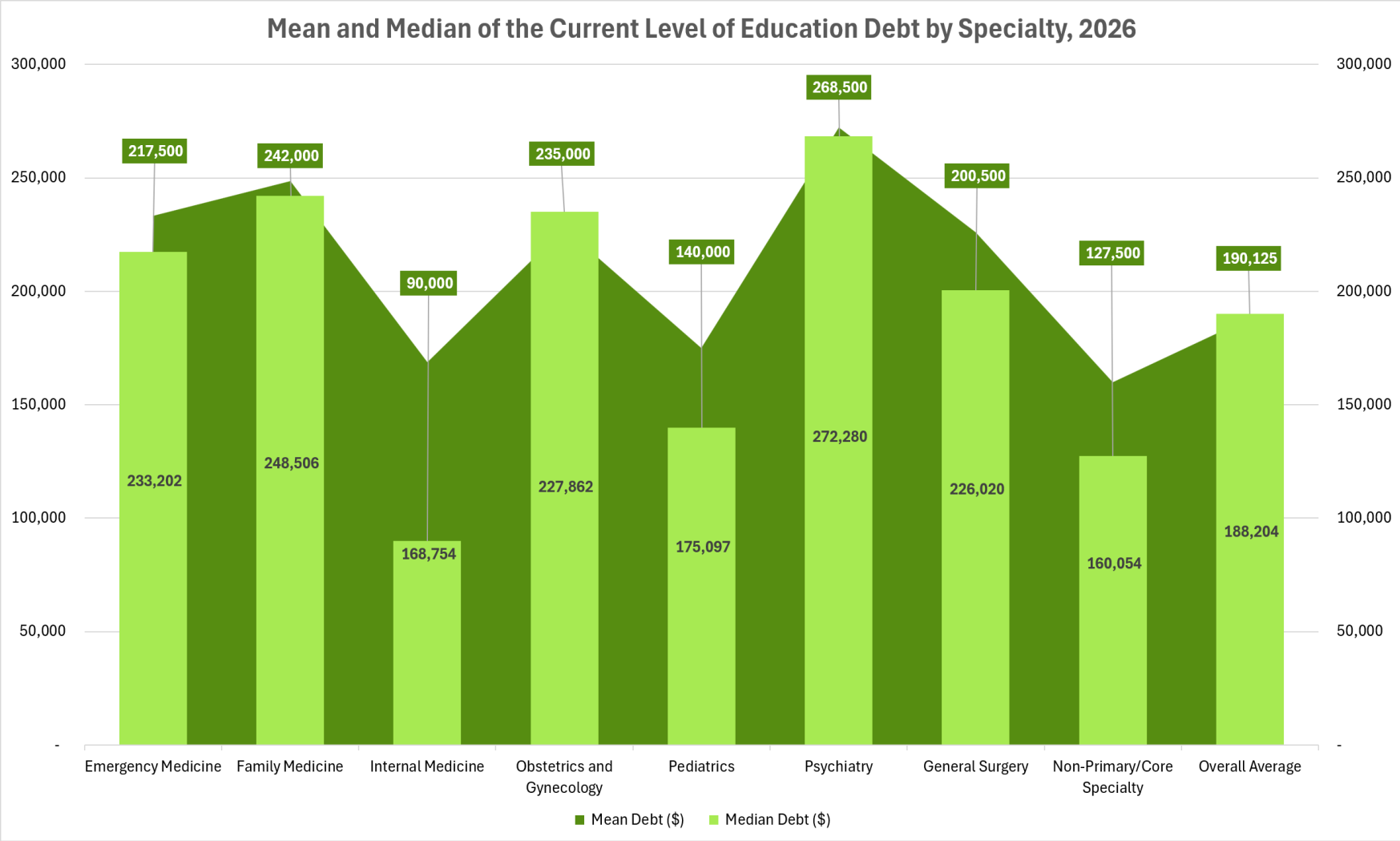


Figure 33: Current Level of Education Debt, 2026

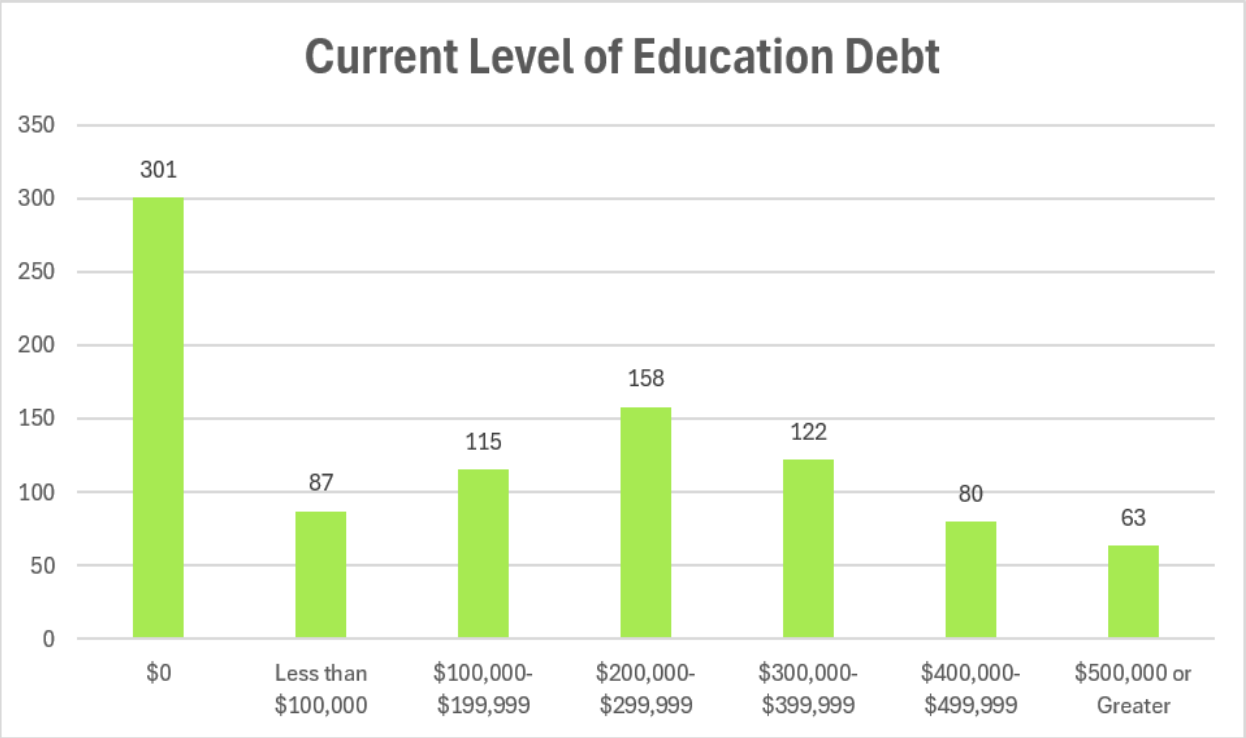
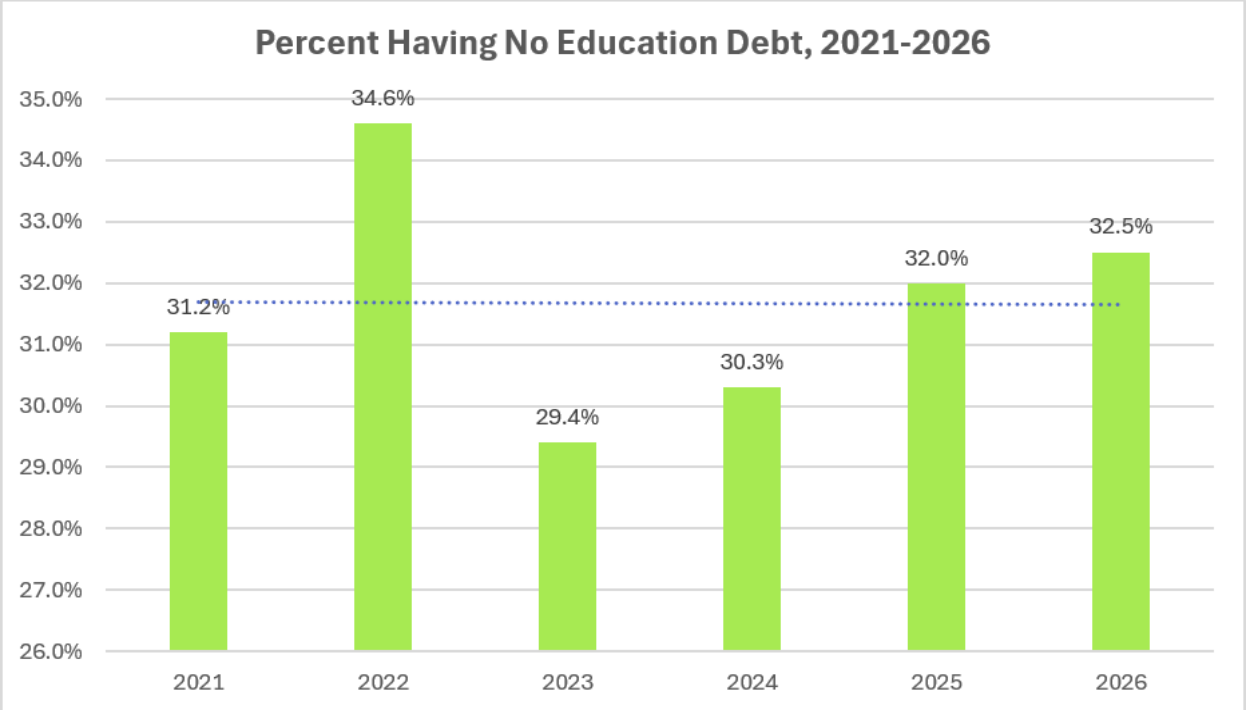


Figure 34: Percent Having No Education Debt, 2021-2026

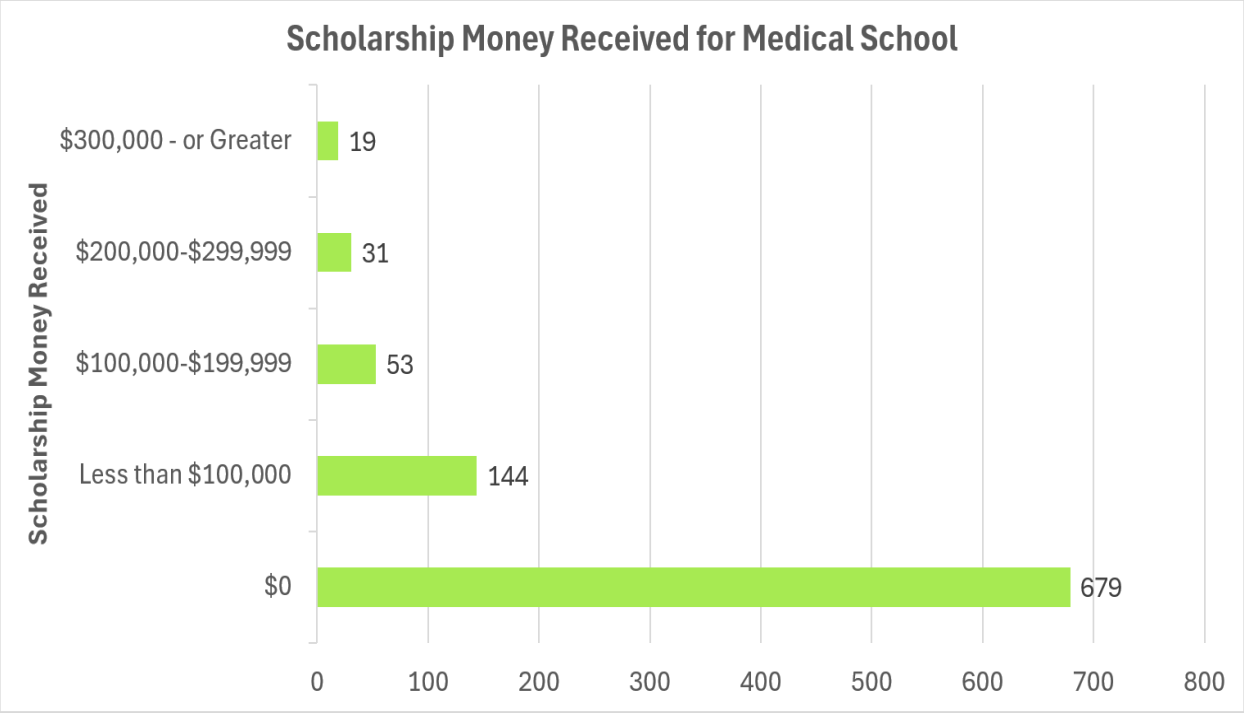


Scholarship Money Received

Table 13: Total Scholarship Money Received for Medical School, 2026

Scholarship Money Received for Medical School	Frequency	Percent
$0	679	73.3%
Less than $100,000	144	15.6%
$100,000-$199,999	53	5.7%
$200,000-$299,999	31	3.3%
$300,000-$399,999	8	0.9%
$400,000-$499,999	4	0.4%
$500,000 or Greater	7	0.8%
Total	**926**	**100.0%**

Figure 35: Total Scholarship Money Received for Medical School



Expected Gross Income in First Year of Practice

Tables 14 and 15, along with Figure 36, display the expected first-year gross income across specialties, including both mean and median values.

Table 14: Expected Gross Income in First Year of Practice, 2026

Expected Gross Income in First Year of Practice	Frequency	Percent
Less than $100,000	169	18.3%
$100,000-$199,999	71	7.7%
$200,000-$299,999	278	30.0%
$300,000-$399,999	216	23.3%
$400,000-$499,999	95	10.3%
$500,000 or Greater	97	10.5%
Total	**926**	**100.0%**

Table 15: Expected Gross Income in First Year of Practice by Specialty, 2026

Specialty	Mean Expected Gross Income ($)	Median Expected Gross Income ($)
Emergency Medicine	268,464	327,500
Family Medicine	257,158	270,000
Internal Medicine	229,856	260,000
Obstetrics and Gynecology	251,310	300,000
Pediatrics	140,467	160,000
Psychiatry	239,405	281,000
Surgery	261,684	300,000
Non-Primary/Core Specialty	347,378	325,000
Overall Average	**250,789**	**277,900**

Figure 36: Expected Gross Income in First Year of Practice, 2026

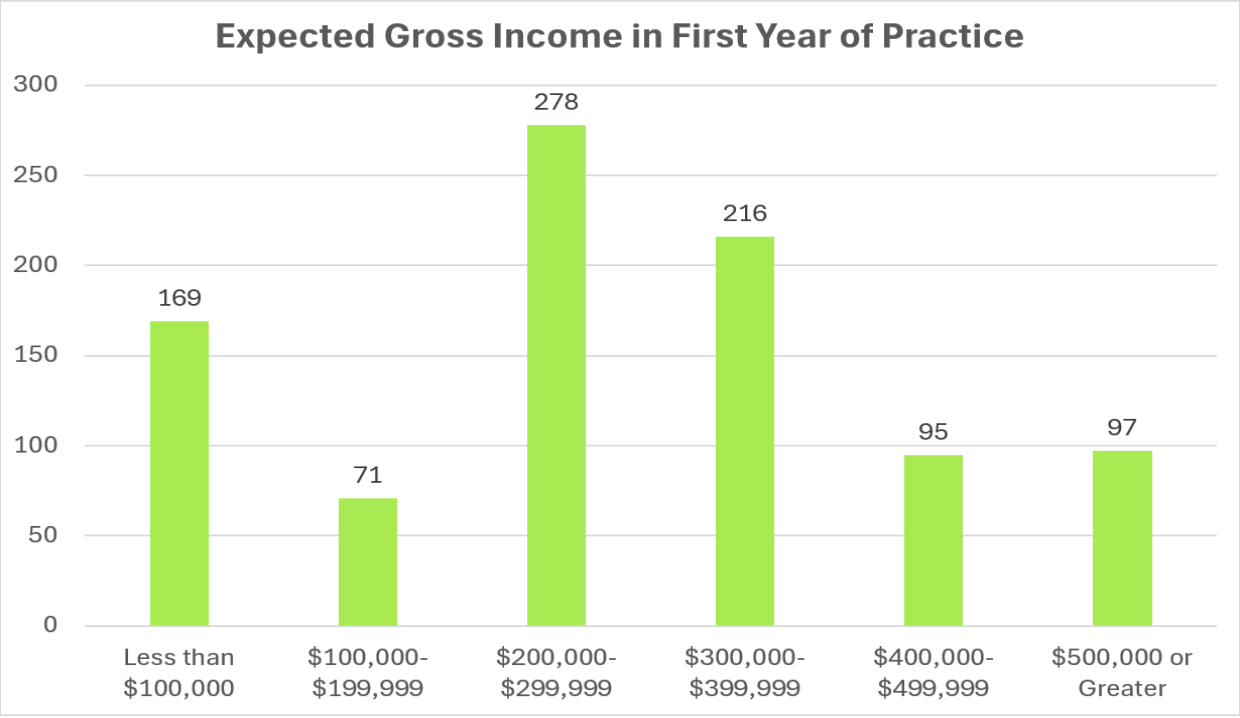


Table 16: Comparison of Expected Gross Income in First Year of Practice and Mean Debt by Specialty, 2026

Specialty	Mean Income ($)	Mean Debt ($)
Emergency Medicine	268,464	233,202
Family Medicine	257,158	248,506
Internal Medicine	229,856	168,754
Obstetrics and Gynecology	251,310	227,862
Pediatrics	140,467	175,097
Psychiatry	239,405	272,280
General Surgery	261,684	226,020
Non-Primary/Core Specialty	347,378	160,054
Overall Average	**250,789**	**188,204**

Figure 37: Comparison of Expected Gross Income in First Year of Practice and Mean Debt by Specialty, 2026

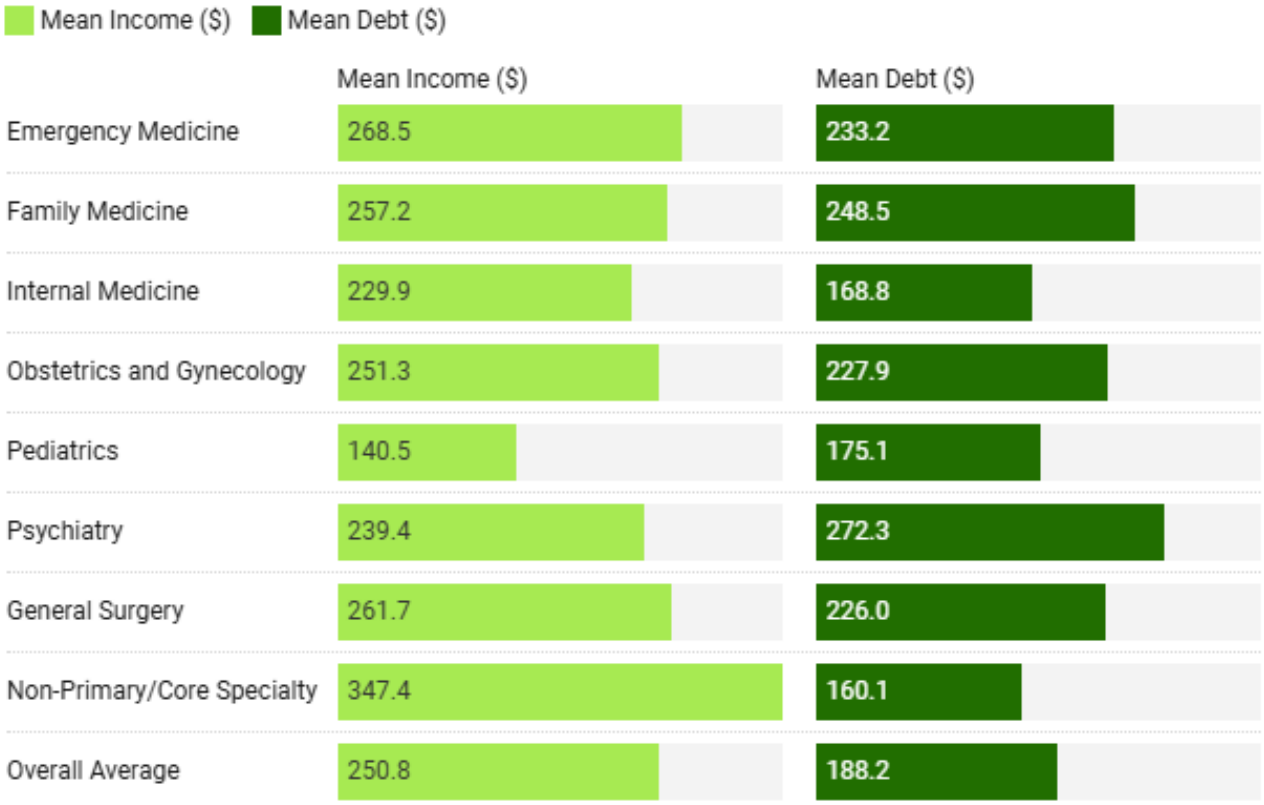
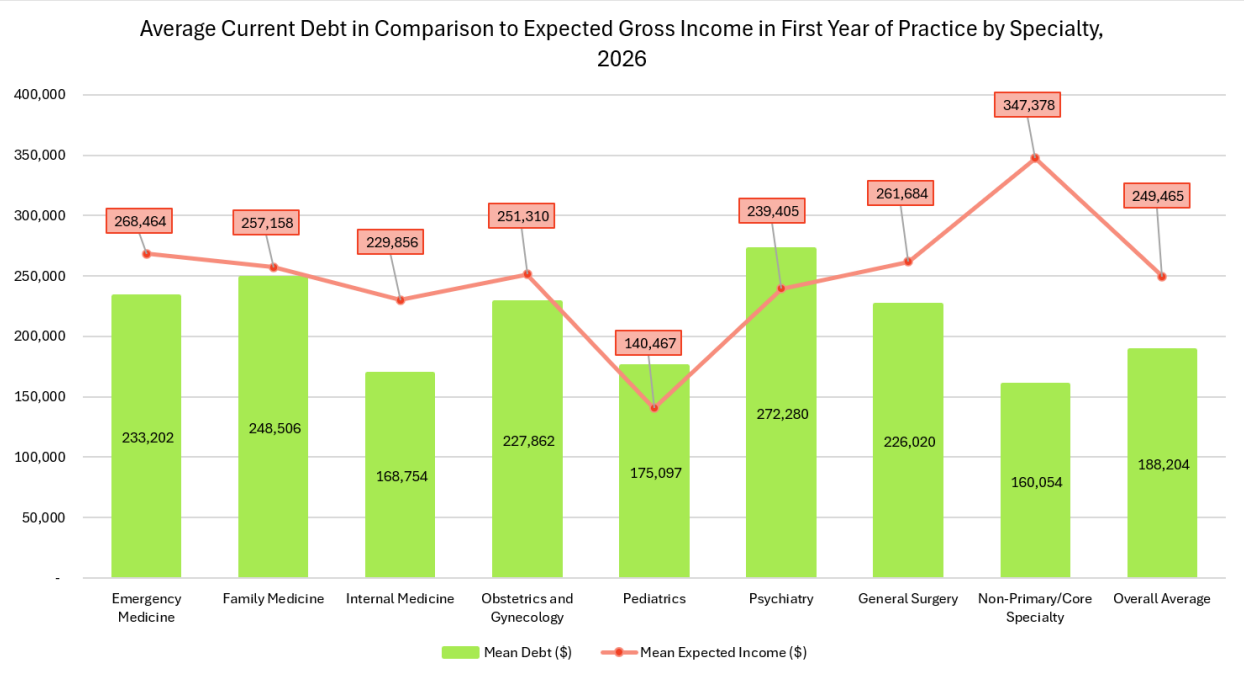


Table 17: Average Current Debt in Comparison to Expected Gross Income in First Year of Practice by Specialty, 2026

Specialty	Mean Debt ($)	Mean Expected Income ($)
Emergency Medicine	233,202	268,464
Family Medicine	248,506	257,158
Internal Medicine	168,754	229,856
Obstetrics and Gynecology	227,862	251,310
Pediatrics	175,097	140,467
Psychiatry	272,280	239,405
General Surgery	226,020	261,684
Non-Primary/Core Specialty	160,054	347,378
Overall Average	**188,204**	**249,465**

Figure 38: Average Current Debt in Comparison to Expected Gross Income in First Year of Practice by Specialty, 2026



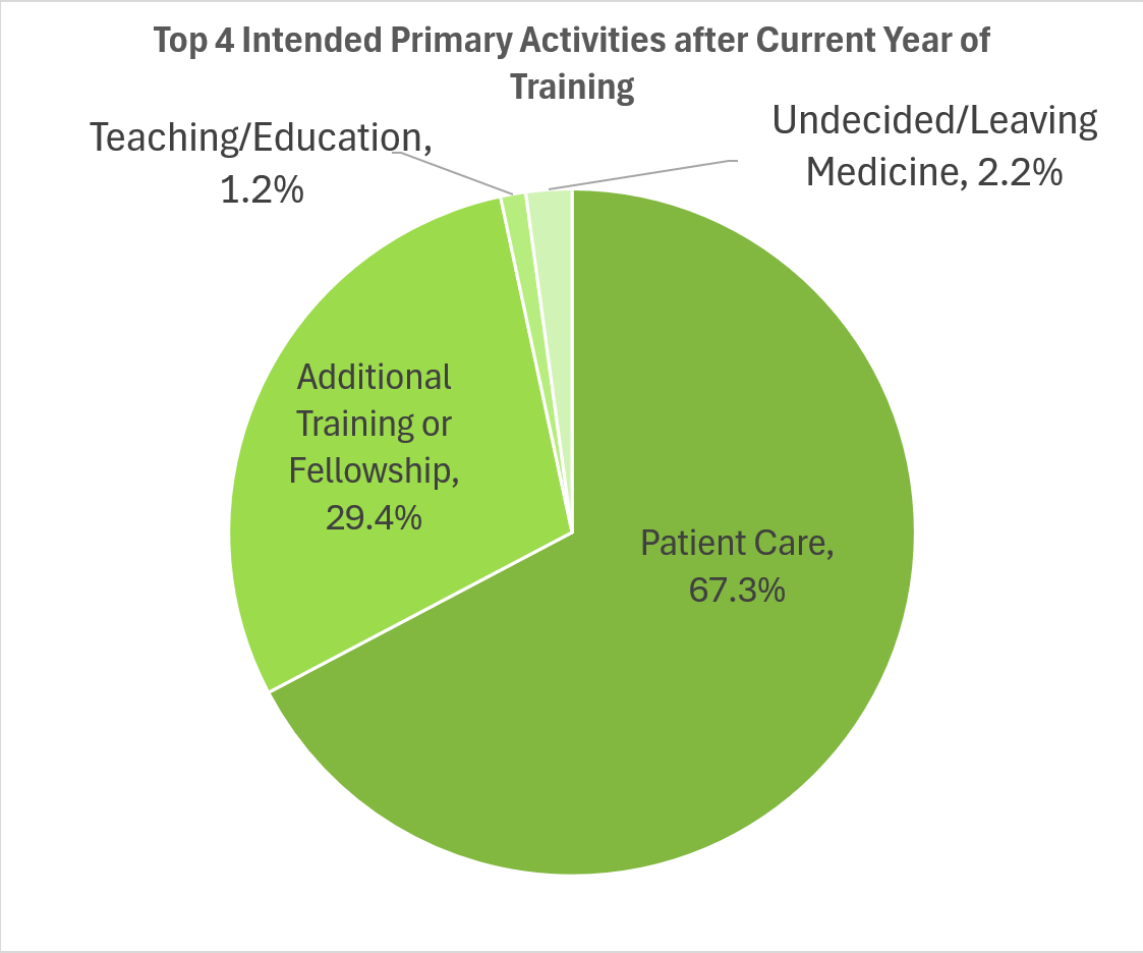
Practice Information

Intended Primary Activity

Table 18: Top 4 Intended Primary Activities after Current Year of Training, 2026

Top 4 Intended Primary Activities after Current Year of Training	Frequency	Percent
Patient Care	623	67.3%
Additional Training or Fellowship	272	29.4%
Teaching/Education	11	1.2%
Undecided/Leaving Medicine	20	2.2%
Total	**926**	**100.0%**

Figure 39: Top 4 Intended Primary Activities After Current Year of Training, 2026



Intended Practice Setting

Table 19: Practice Setting, 2026

Practice Setting	Frequency	Percent
Hospital	279	30.1%
Academic/Lab	251	27.1%
Group practice (Employee)	165	17.8%
Undecided/Non-Health Care Related Job	137	14.8%
Solo/Independent Practice or Clinic	75	8.1%
Government Agency/Military	19	2.1%
Total	**926**	**100.0%**

Expect to be at Principal Practice for 4 or More Years by GME Program

Table 20: Expect to be at Principal Practice for 4 or More Years by Program, 2026

Program Name	Yes		Total
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency
Advent Health - Redmond	3	23.1%	13
Archbold Medical Center	0	0.0%	5
Atrium Health Floyd	2	25.0%	8
Atrium Health Navicent	7	21.2%	33
AU/UGA @ St. Mary's	4	36.4%	11
Colquitt Regional Medical Center	0	0.0%	7
Emory Healthcare-St. Francis	2	20.0%	10
Emory Healthcare-Warner Robins	2	33.3%	6
Emory University School of Medicine	44	12.9%	340
Gateway Behavioral Health	1	11.1%	9
Hamilton Medical Center	5	31.3%	16
Medical College of Georgia at Augusta University	42	26.8%	157
Memorial Health University Medical Center	4	11.4%	35
Memorial Satilla Health	0	0.0%	4
Morehouse School of Medicine	11	21.2%	52
Northeast Georgia Health System	13	22.0%	59
Northside Gwinnett Medical Center	2	10.0%	20
Northside Hospital	0	0.0%	4
Phoebe Putney Memorial Hospital	0	0.0%	7
Piedmont Athens Regional Medical Center	3	16.7%	18
Piedmont Columbus Regional Midtown	3	25.0%	12
Piedmont Macon Medical Center	3	16.7%	18
South Georgia Medical Center	1	12.5%	8
Wellstar Cobb Hospital	3	30.0%	10
Wellstar Douglas Medical Center	2	33.3%	6
Wellstar Kennestone Hospital	13	26.5%	49
Wellstar Spalding Medical Center	1	11.1%	9
Grand Total	**171**	**18.5%**	**926**

Practice Location

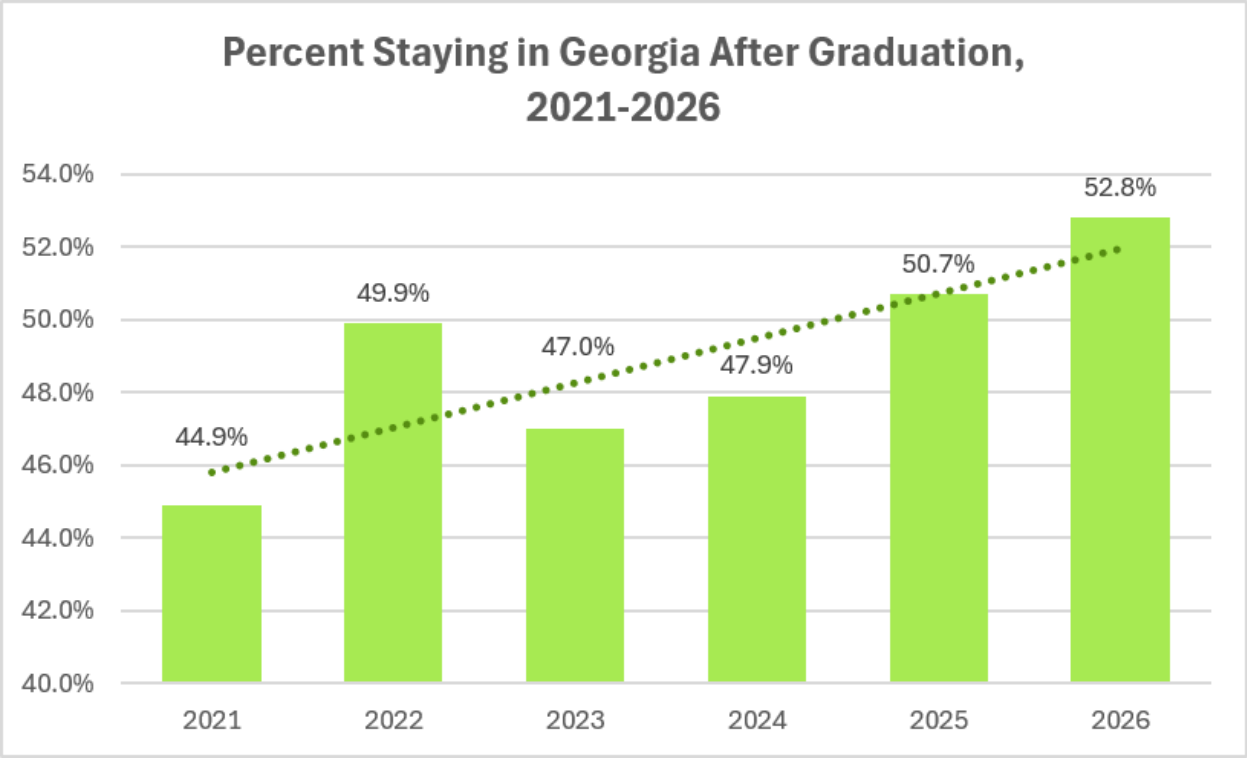
Table 21 and Figure 40 provide insight into respondents' primary activity locations after graduation, along with a five-year trend in the percentage planning to remain in Georgia. Table 21 illustrates that more than 50.0% of GME graduates intend to be in Georgia in the next year (all primary activities).

Table 21: Practice Location, 2026

Location of Primary Activity After Graduation Year	Frequency	Percent
Georgia	489	52.8%
Other U.S. State or Territory	428	46.2%
Outside of U.S.	9	1.0%
Total	**926**	**100.0%**

Figure 40: Percent Staying in Georgia After Graduation, 2021-2026

Figure 38 shows a 2.1 percentage-point increase in the number of GME graduates who are going to remain in Georgia after graduation as compared to last year, 2025.



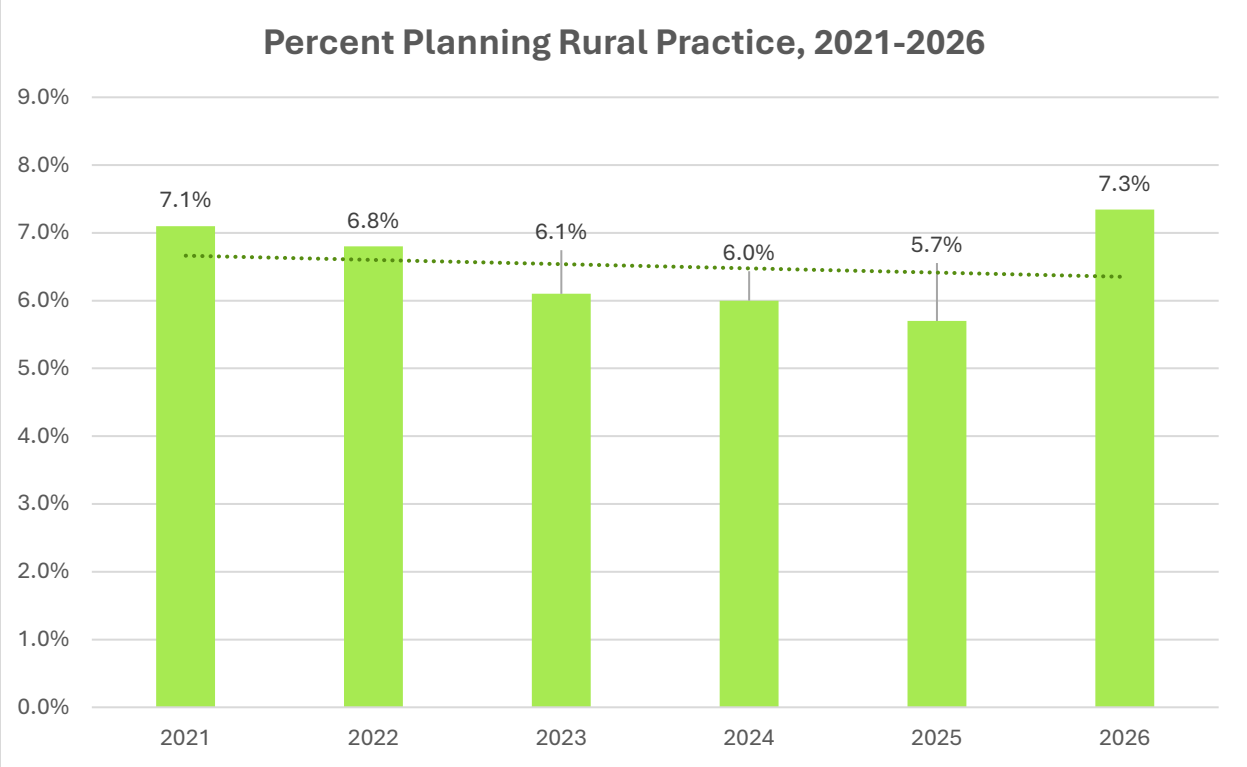
Practice Area

Table 22 and Figure 41 present an overview of the intended practice areas of respondents after graduation, along with a six-year trend indicating the percentage of respondents planning to engage in practice within a rural setting.

Table 22: Practice Area, 2026

Practice Area	Frequency	Percent
Suburban	288	31.1%
Inner City	270	29.2%
Other areas within major city	184	19.9%
Small city (city population less than 50,000)	116	12.5%
Rural (county population less than 50,000)	68	7.3%
Grand Total	**926**	**100.0%**

Figure 41: Percent Planning Rural Practice, 2021-2026



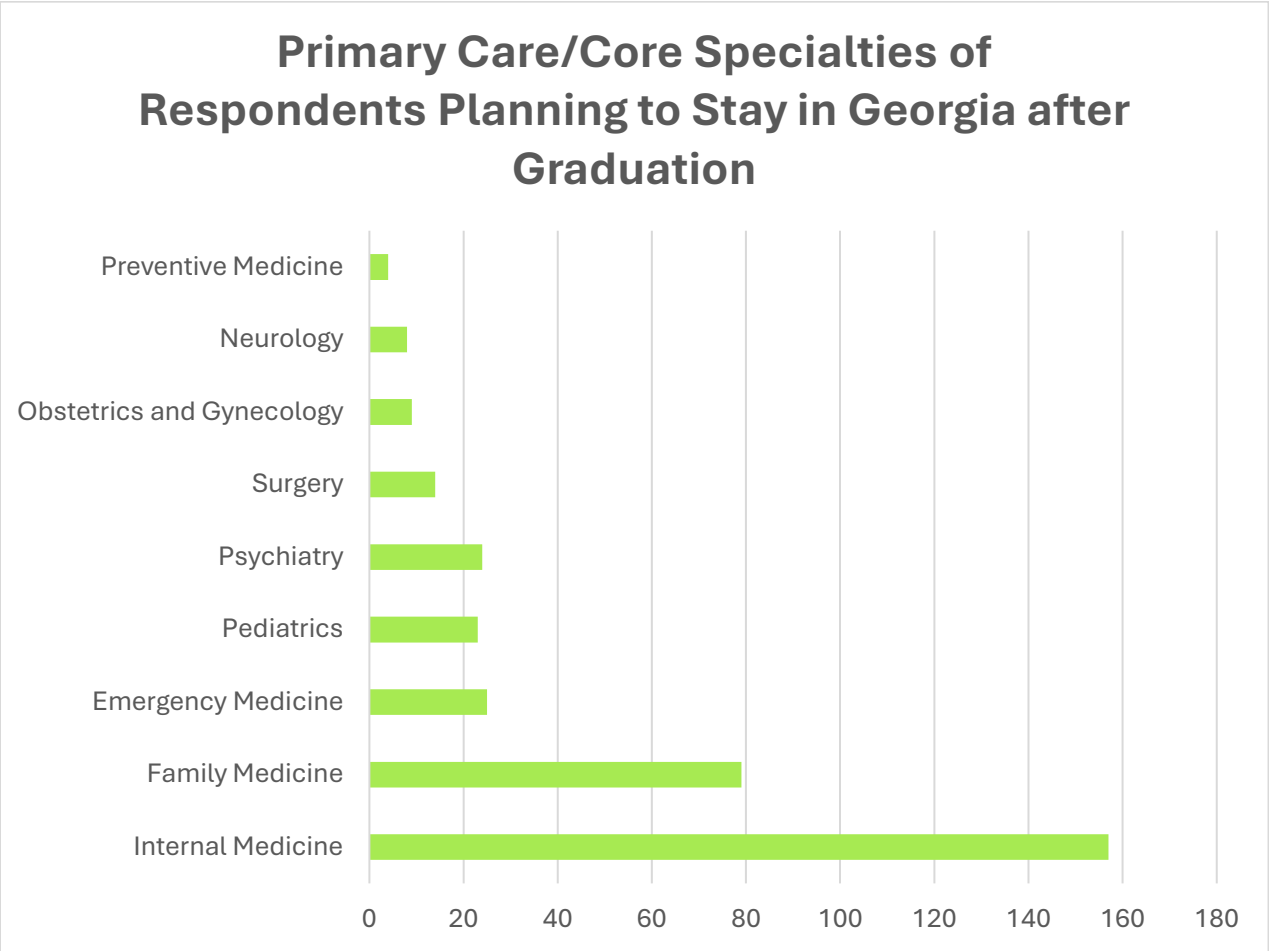
Practice Specialty

Table 23 and Figure 42 highlight the total number of graduates completing each specialty, along with the percentage who plan to remain in Georgia.

Table 23: Specialties of Respondents Planning to Stay in Georgia after Completion of their Program

Specialty	Total Completing Specialty	Number Staying in Georgia	Percent Staying in Georgia
Internal Medicine	259	157	60.6%
Family Medicine	120	79	65.8%
Emergency Medicine	48	25	52.1%
Pediatrics	43	23	53.5%
Psychiatry	42	24	57.1%
Surgery	38	14	36.8%
Obstetrics and Gynecology	29	9	31.0%
Neurology	17	8	47.1%
Preventive Medicine	4	4	100.0%
Primary Care/Core Subtotal	**600**	**343**	**57.2%**
All Other Specialties	326	146	44.8%
Total	**926**	**489**	**52.8%**

Figure 42: Primary Care/Core Specialties of Respondents Planning to Stay in Georgia after Graduation



Note: The above chart shows the specialties of primary care/core GME graduates who plan to remain in Georgia after graduation.

Sub-Specializing among Primary Care/Core Graduates

Internal Medicine Graduates Pursuing Fellowship

Tables 24 and 25 provide a detailed breakdown of Internal Medicine graduates, highlighting the percentage of those who are pursuing fellowship training versus those who are not, along with the specific subspecialties that graduates are pursuing in their fellowship training.

Table 24: Internal Medicine Graduates Pursuing Fellowship

Internal Medicine	Frequency	Percent
Total Graduates	259	100.0%
Not Pursuing Fellowship	196	75.7%
Pursuing Fellowship	63	24.3%

Table 25: Fellowship Specialties Pursued by Internal Medicine Graduates

Fellowship Specialties	Frequency	Percent
Cardiovascular Disease	16	25.4%
Pulmonary Critical Care	11	17.5%
Endocrinology, Diabetes, and Metabolism	7	11.1%
Nephrology	5	7.9%
Rheumatology	4	6.3%
Infectious Disease	4	6.3%
Hematology and Medical Oncology	4	6.3%
Hospice and Palliative Medicine	3	4.8%
Sports Medicine	2	3.2%
Other	1	1.6%
Critical Care Medicine	1	1.6%
Gastroenterology	1	1.6%
Geriatric Medicine	1	1.6%
Addiction Medicine	1	1.6%
Anesthesiology	1	1.6%
Not applicable	1	1.6%
Grand Total	**63**	**100.0%**

Primary Care/Core Specialty Graduates Going into Sub-Specialties

Table 26 provides an overview of the total number of Primary Care/Core Specialty graduates pursuing subspecialty training, highlighting those who plan to stay in Georgia for additional training and those who plan to continue their training out of state.

Table 26: Primary Care/Core Graduates Going into Sub-Specialties

Specialty	Total Going into Sub-Specialty	Number Staying in Georgia	Number Going out of State	Percent Staying in Georgia	Percent Going out of State
Emergency Medicine	11	6	5	55%	45%
Family Medicine	12	2	10	17%	83%
Internal Medicine	63	24	39	38%	62%
Obstetrics and Gynecology	9	1	8	11%	89%
Pediatrics	15	3	12	20%	80%
Psychiatry	7	2	5	29%	71%
Surgery	22	6	16	27%	73%
Primary Care/Core Subtotal	**139**	**44**	**95**	**32%**	**68%**
All Other Specialties	102	38	64	37%	63%
Total	**241**	**82**	**159**	**34%**	**66%**

Job Search

Graduates who have Actively Searched for a Job

Table 27: Actively Job Searched, 2026

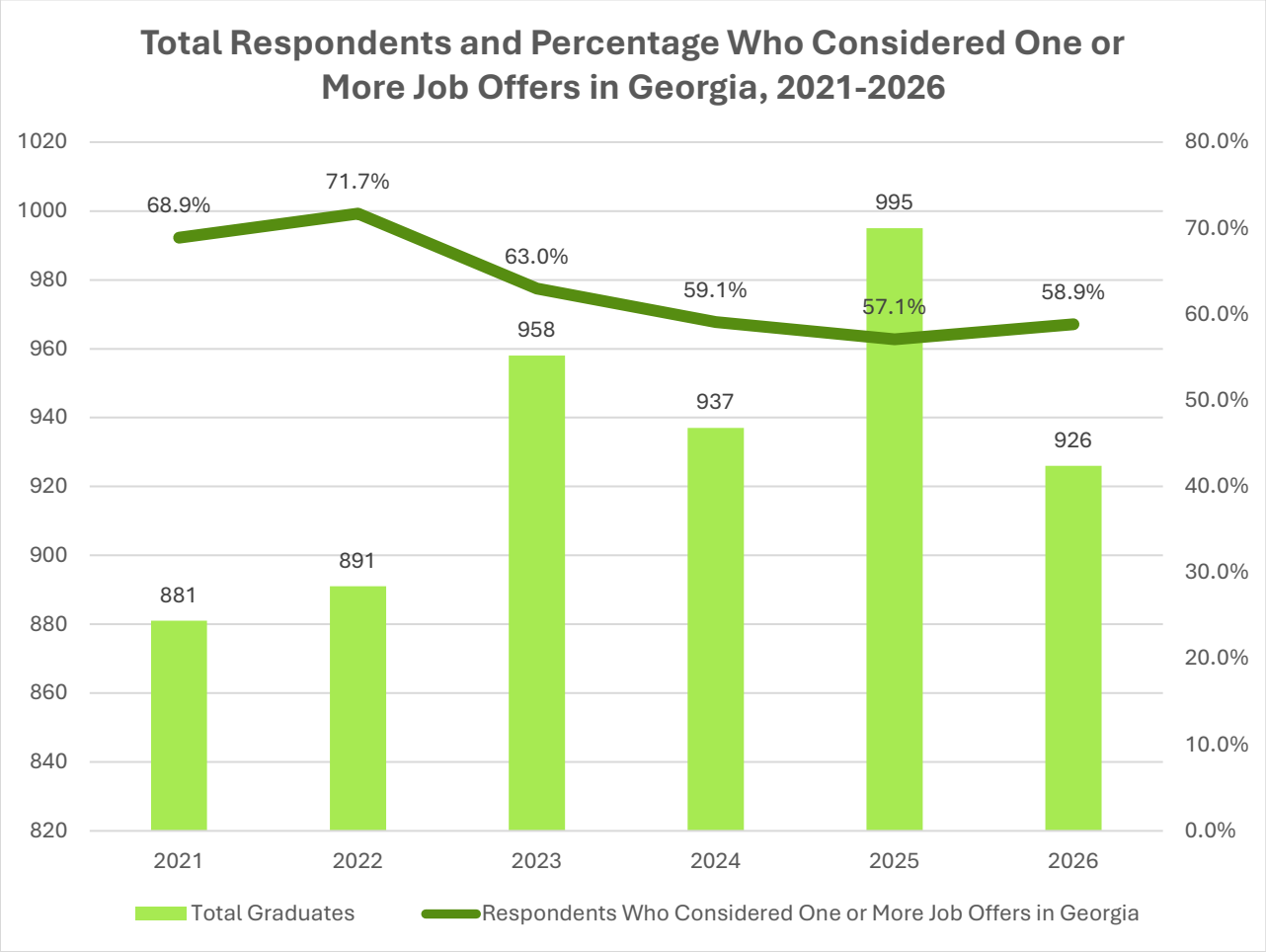
Actively Job Searched	Frequency	Percent
No	237	25.6%
Yes	689	74.4%
Total	**926**	**100.0%**

Table 28: Job Offers and Acceptance, 2026

Been Offered a Job	Frequency	Percent
No offers	213	23.0%
Yes, and accepted the offers	650	70.2%
Yes, and declined the offers	63	6.8%
Total	**926**	**100.0%**

Graduates Considering Job Offers in Georgia

Figure 43: Percentage of Respondents Who Considered One or More Job Offers in Georgia, 2021-2026

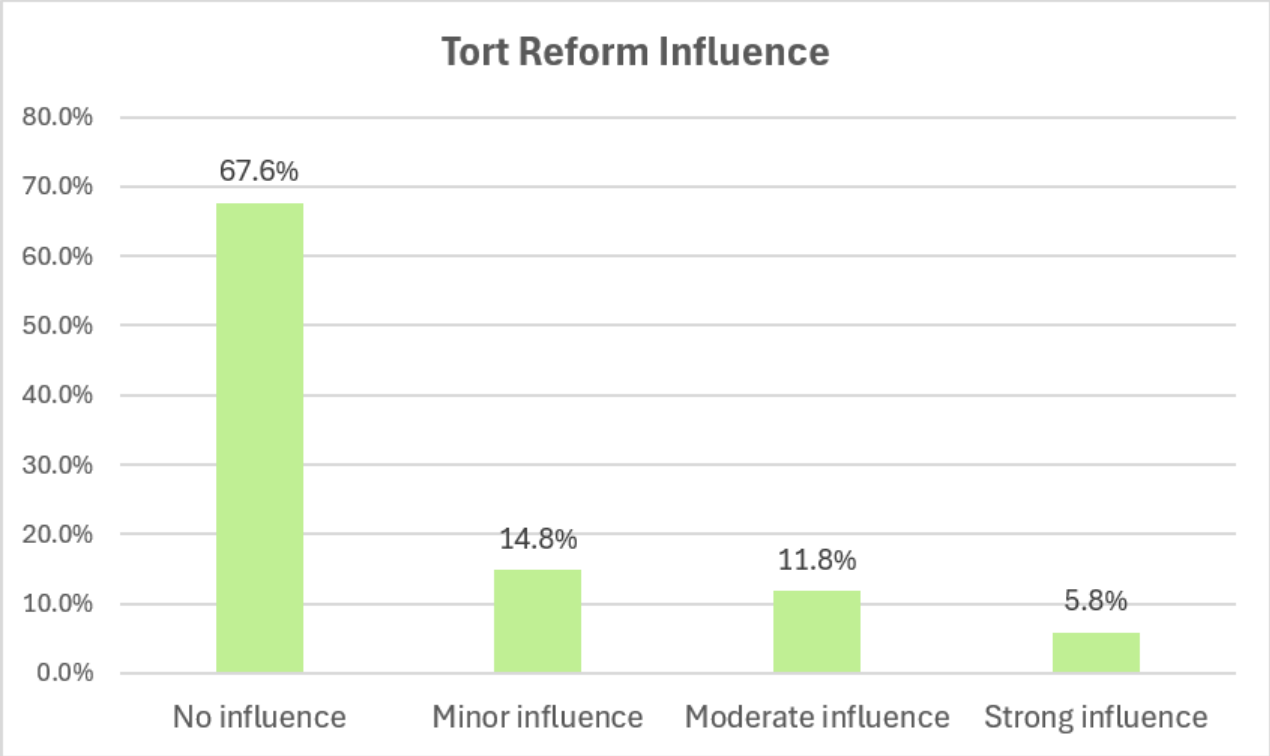


Tort Reform

Table 29: Influence of State Liability Environment (Tort Reform) on Job Search

Tort Reform Influence	Frequency	Percent
No influence	626	67.6%
Minor influence	137	14.8%
Moderate influence	109	11.8%
Strong influence	54	5.8%
Total	**926**	**100.0%**

Figure 44: Influence of State Liability Environment (Tort Reform) on Job Search



Job Search Approaches

Table 30: Job Search Approaches, 2026

Job Search Approaches	Frequency	Percent
Peer or Colleague Referral	290	22.2%
Independent Online Search Activities	251	19.2%
Word of Mouth	200	15.3%
Recruiter Contacted Me	146	11.2%
Announcements Career Fairs	60	4.6%
Other	48	3.7%
Specialty-Specific Job Boards	44	3.4%
Third Party Representation	18	1.4%

Note: Respondents could select multiple job search approaches. 248 respondents, or 19%, selected 'Not Applicable '.

Difficulty Finding a Job

Table 31: Difficulty Finding a Job Rating, 2026

Difficulty Finding a Job Rating	Frequency	Percent
Very easy	171	18.5%
Somewhat easy	175	18.9%
Neutral	198	21.4%
Somewhat difficult	124	13.4%
Very difficult	44	4.8%
Not applicable	214	23.1%
Total	**926**	**100.0%**

Figure 45: Difficulty Finding a Job Rating, 2026

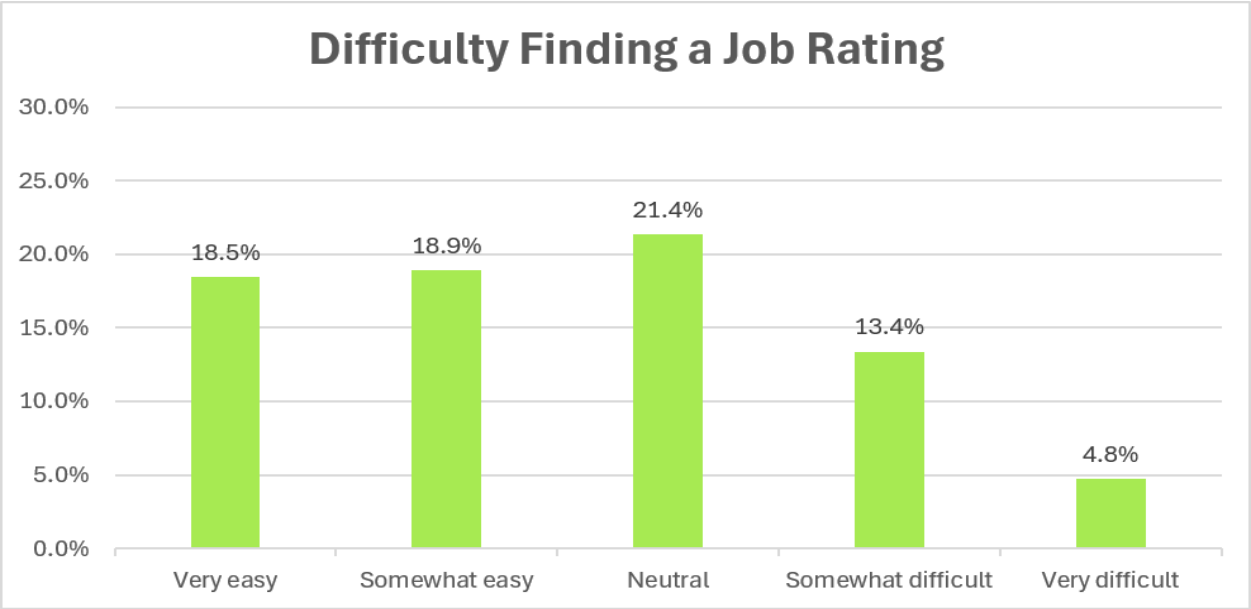


Table 32: Specific Difficulties in Finding a Job, 2026

Specific Difficulty in Finding a Job	Frequency	Percent
Not a Favorable Work-Life Balance	120	10.6%
Would Not Be Satisfied with the Job	90	7.9%
Practice Did Not Communicate Well	57	5.0%
Other Reason	52	4.6%
Lack of Mentoring Opportunities	44	3.9%
Practice Was Not Collaborative	29	2.6%
Did Not Have Passion for the Practice	24	2.1%
Not Enough Challenge	19	1.7%
Practice Did Not Advocate for Patients	16	1.4%

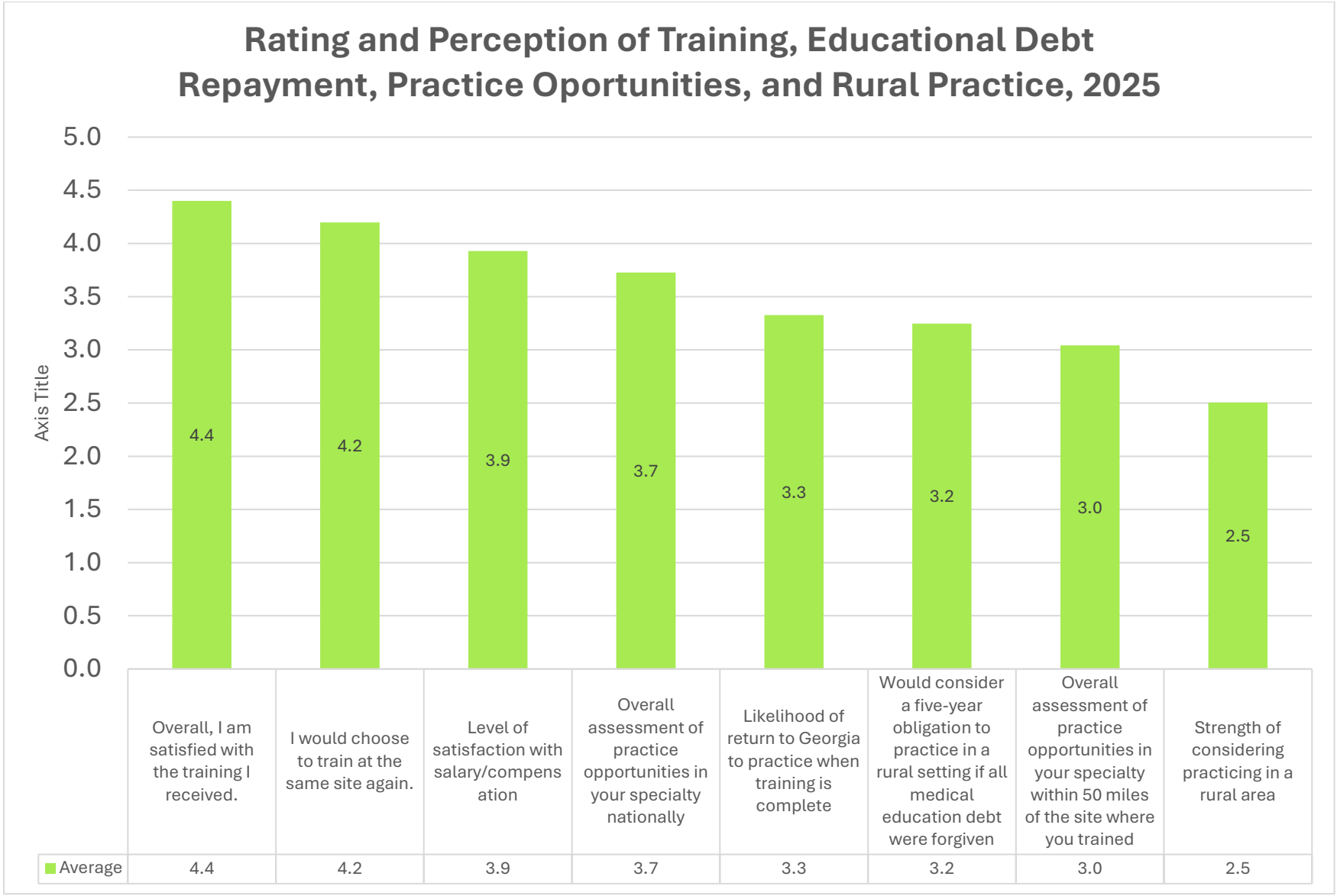
Note: Respondents could select multiple options. The percentages reflect the proportion of respondents who selected each option; 3 respondents mentioned they are going to a fellowship. 684 Respondents, or 60.3%, responded 'Not Applicable'.

Ratings and Perception of Training, Debt Repayment, Practice Opportunities, and Rural Practice

Table 33: Ratings and Perception of Training, Educational Debt Repayment, Practice Opportunities, and Rural Practice, 2026

Question or Statement	Rating Scale	Number of Responses	Average
In your job search, how strongly did you consider practicing in a rural area (county population less than 50,000)?	1 = DID NOT CONSIDER 5 = STRONGLY CONSIDERED	757	2.5
If all of your medical school debt were forgiven, how likely would you be to consider a five-year obligation to practice in a rural setting (county population less than 50,000)?	1 = VERY UNLIKELY 5 = VERY LIKELY	680	3.2
What is your level of satisfaction with your salary/compensation at your next employer?*	1 = VERY DISSATISFIED 5 = VERY SATISFIED	735	3.9
What is your overall assessment of practice opportunities in your specialty within 50 miles of the site where you trained?	1 = VERY FEW JOBS 5 = VERY MANY JOBS	926	3.0
What is your overall assessment of practice opportunities in your specialty nationally?	1 = VERY FEW JOBS 5 = VERY MANY JOBS	926	3.7
If you are going on for additional training/fellowship and are leaving the state to continue your training, what is the likelihood you will return to Georgia to practice when your training is complete?	1 = VERY UNLIKELY 5 = VERY LIKELY	339	3.3
Overall, I am satisfied with the training I received.	1 = STRONGLY DISAGREE 5 = STRONGLY AGREE	926	4.4
I would choose to train at the same site again.	1 = STRONGLY DISAGREE 5 = STRONGLY AGREE	926	4.2

Figure 46: Ratings and Perception of Training, Educational Debt Repayment, Practice Opportunities, and Rural Practice, 2026



Reasons for Leaving Georgia

Table 34 is based on an open-ended question that asks the graduates to identify what their reasons for accepting employment outside of the state of Georgia. Only 232 responded to the open-ended question.

Table 34: Top 3 Reasons for Accepting Employment Out of State, 2026

Top 3 Reasons for Accepting Employment Out of State	Frequency	Percent
Better Salary, Benefits, and Location	60	25.9%
Overall Lack of Jobs/Practice Opportunities	53	22.8%
Proximity to Family	43	18.5%
Work Opportunities for Spouses	17	7.3%
Visa Sponsorship	11	4.7%
Progressive Politics/Laws	11	4.7%
Work-Life Balance	9	3.9%
Training/Fellowship Opportunity	8	3.4%
Cost of Living/Better Quality of Life	8	3.4%
Military/Other Service Obligation	5	2.2%
Business/Ownership Opportunity	4	1.7%
No Income Tax	3	1.3%
Total	**232**	**100.0%**

Figure 47: Top 3 Reasons for Accepting Employment out of State, 2026

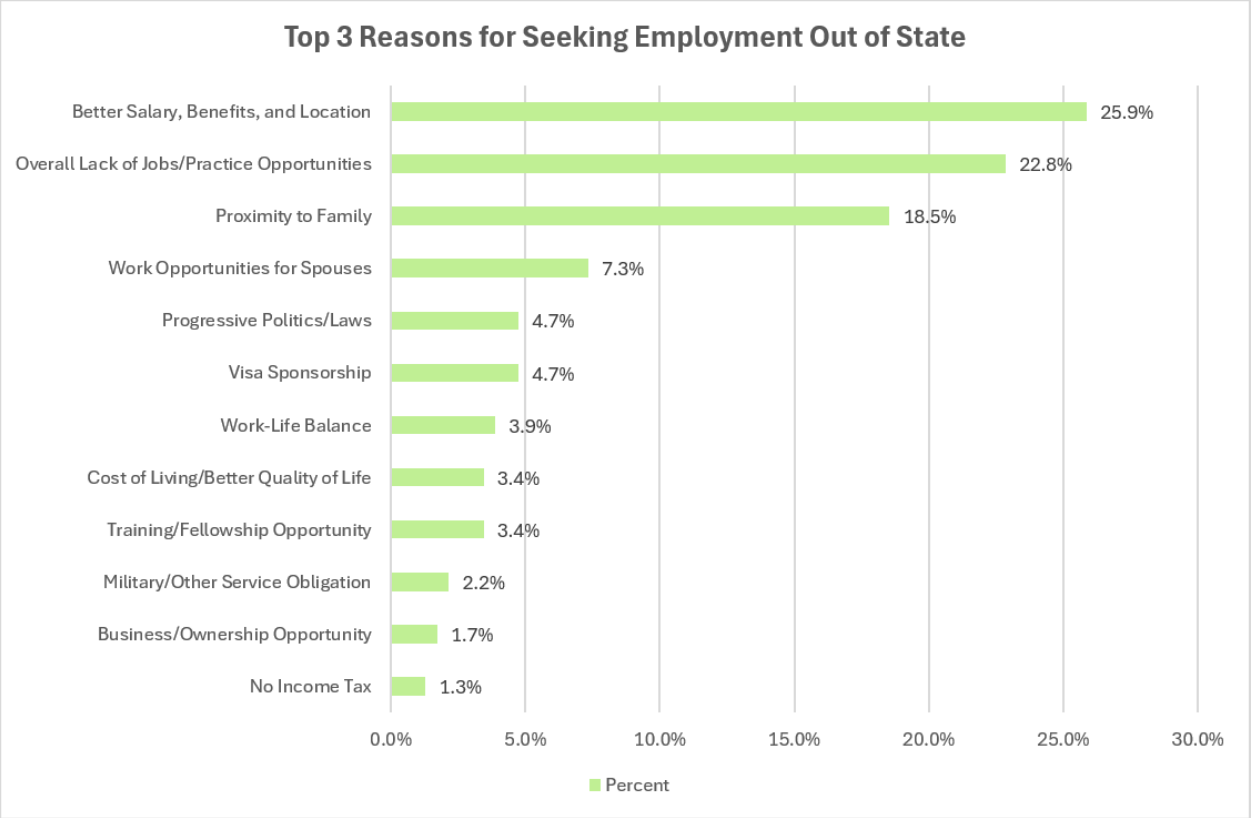
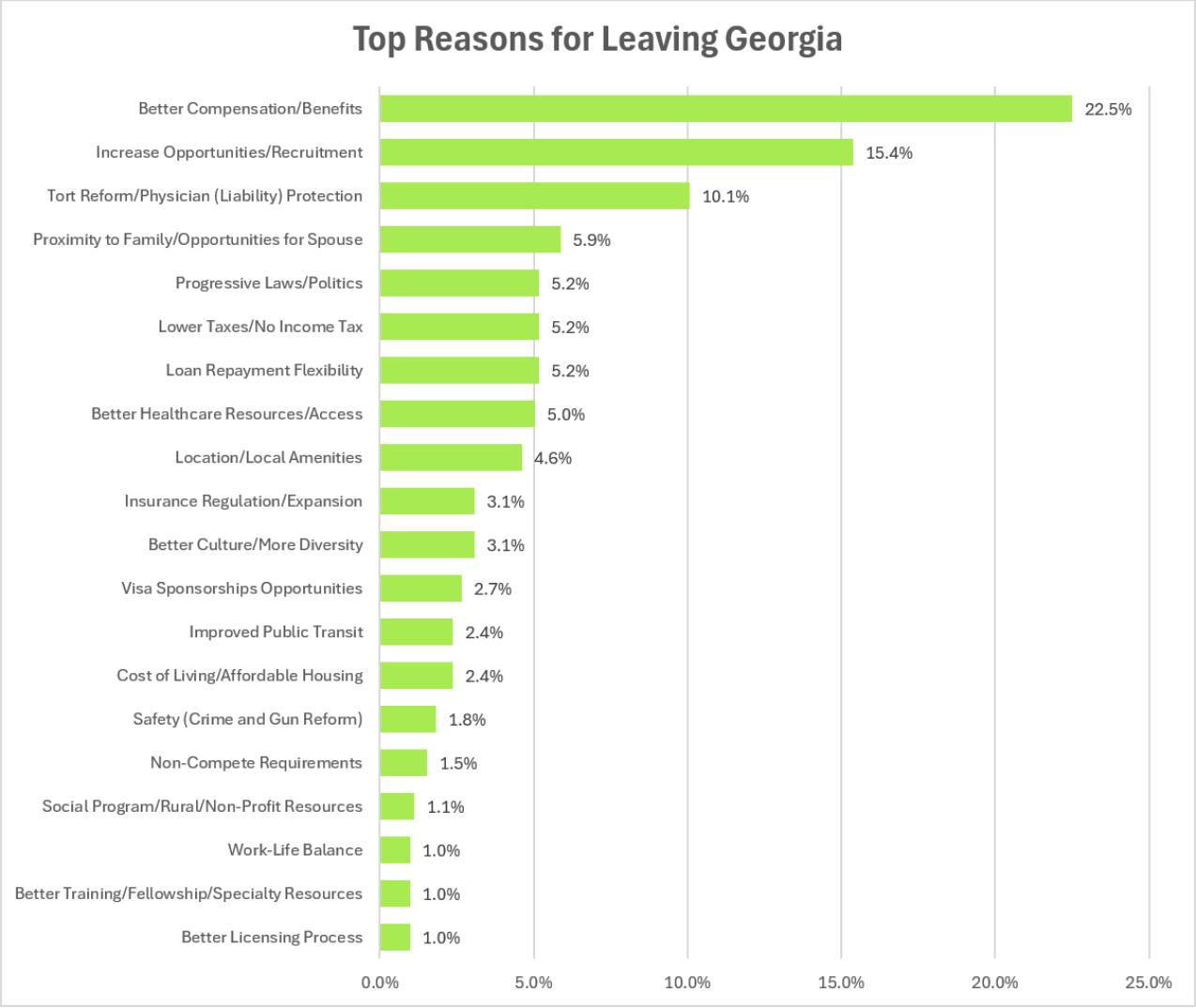


Table 35: Top 3 Reasons for Leaving Georgia, 2026

Top Reasons for Leaving Georgia	Frequency	Percent
Better Compensation/Benefits	161	22.5%
Increase Opportunities/Recruitment	110	15.4%
Tort Reform/Physician (Liability) Protection	72	10.1%
Proximity to Family/Opportunities for Spouse	42	5.9%
Loan Repayment Flexibility	37	5.2%
Lower Taxes/No Income Tax	37	5.2%
Progressive Laws/Politics	37	5.2%
Better Healthcare Resources/Access	36	5.0%
Location/Local Amenities	33	4.6%
Better Culture/More Diversity	22	3.1%
Insurance Regulation/Expansion	22	3.1%
Visa Sponsorships Opportunities	19	2.7%
Cost of Living/Affordable Housing	17	2.4%
Improved Public Transit	17	2.4%
Safety (Crime and Gun Reform)	13	1.8%
Non-Compete Requirements	11	1.5%
Social Program/Rural/Non-Profit Resources	8	1.1%
Better Licensing Process	7	1.0%
Better Training/Fellowship/Specialty Resources	7	1.0%
Work-Life Balance	7	1.0%

Figure 48: Top Reasons for Leaving Georgia, 2026



Other Reasons for Leaving Georgia

Beyond the previously listed factors influencing decisions to leave Georgia after the current training year, several respondents shared further insights through open-ended responses. These have been thoughtfully categorized into the following themes:

Salary and Benefits: Many respondents identified salary and benefits as a significant consideration when evaluating employment opportunities outside of Georgia. Respondents noted that positions in other states may offer higher salaries, in addition to employment benefits such as more favorable work hours, greater scheduling flexibility, and more comprehensive benefits packages. Beyond salary, respondents specifically identified incentives such as loan repayment assistance, signing bonuses, and relocation packages. Several respondents also indicated that employment opportunities in other states offered compensation structures that they perceived as more competitive or equitable for new graduates. Others liked the idea of not having to pay income taxes in certain parts of the country.

More Opportunities: Many respondents identified that they wanted to leave Georgia due to a lack of opportunities. A substantial proportion indicated that desired positions were not available in the specific counties where they preferred to live. Respondents also noted challenges related to spousal employment, including limited opportunities for spouses to secure employment in the same location or instances in which a spouse received a higher-paying employment opportunity outside of Georgia.

Additionally, some respondents reported seeking specific employment or training opportunities that were not readily available within the state. These included positions associated with National Resident Matching Program (NRMP) binding matches, National Health Service Corps (NHSC) opportunities, and Public Service Loan Forgiveness (PSLF)-eligible employment, like non-profits. Others expressed interest in dual-specialty training or additional fellowship opportunities in specific specialties that were not offered in Georgia.

Location: A few respondents indicated that cost of living and overall quality-of-life considerations influenced their decisions to leave Georgia. Respondents described seeking locations they perceived as more desirable based on factors such as climate and weather, food and culture, social opportunities, and overall safety. These findings suggest that broader lifestyle factors may also play an important role in their decisions to remain in Georgia.

Tort Reform and Progressive Laws: A small number of respondents identified perceived political, legal, and institutional barriers to providing care for certain populations in need within Georgia, which has caused them to seek employment elsewhere. Respondents expressed a desire for stronger legal protections related to medical malpractice, as well as

changes to state laws and policies affecting reproductive health services, including abortion care.

Visa Opportunities: A few respondents indicated that they are forced to find employment outside of Georgia due to the limited number of opportunities that offer J1 waivers and visa sponsorships.

Ownership: A few respondents found opportunities for them to be a partner, not just an employee.

General Reflections on Training and the Future

Figure 49: Overall Satisfaction with Training

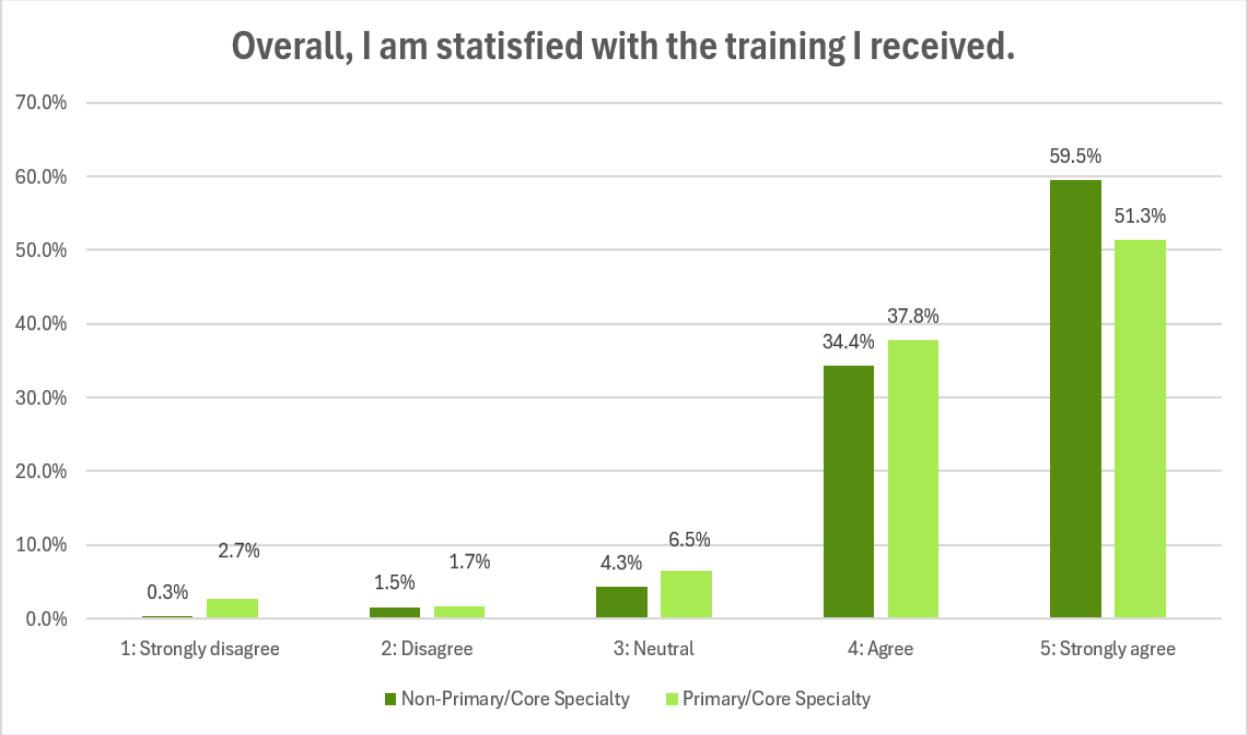
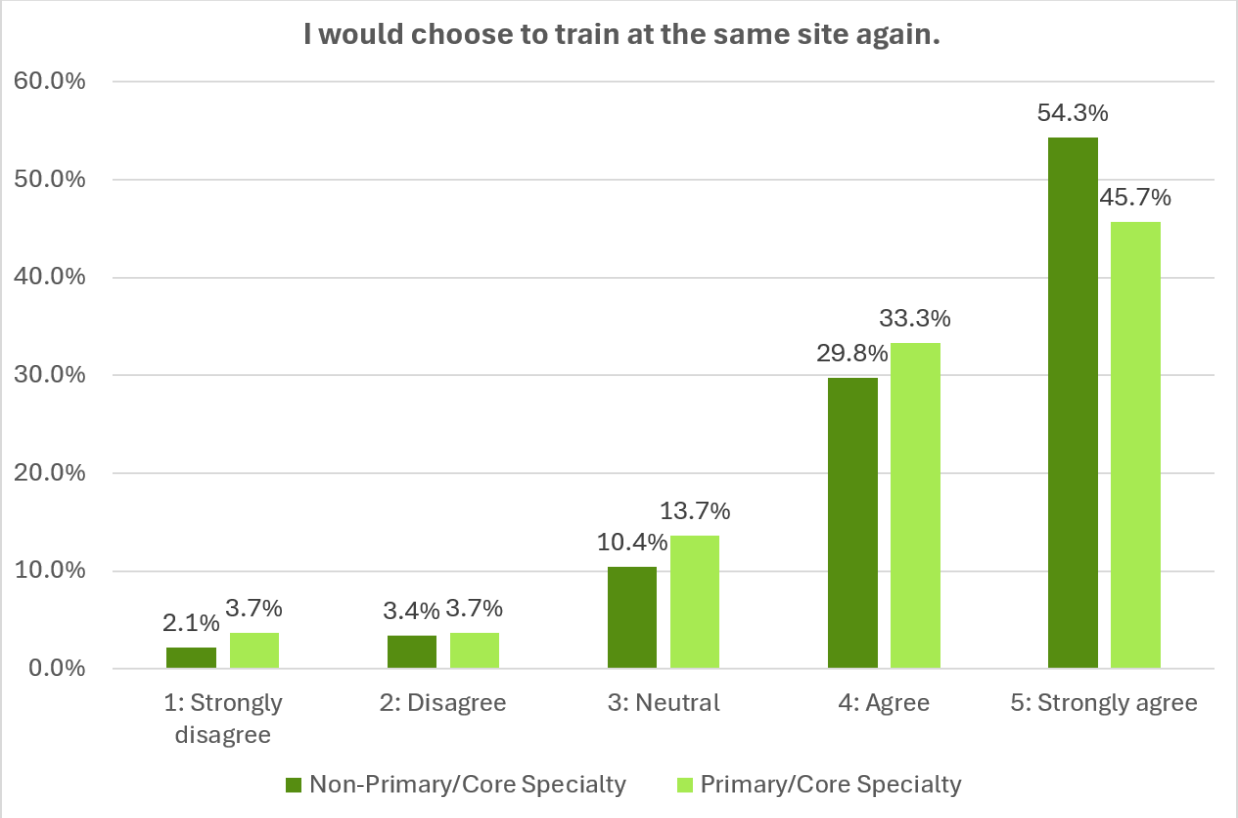


Figure 50: Would the Resident choose to train at their training site again?



Federally Designated Health Professional Shortage Area

Figure 51: Do you have an obligation or visa requirement to work in a federally designated Health Professional Shortage Area?

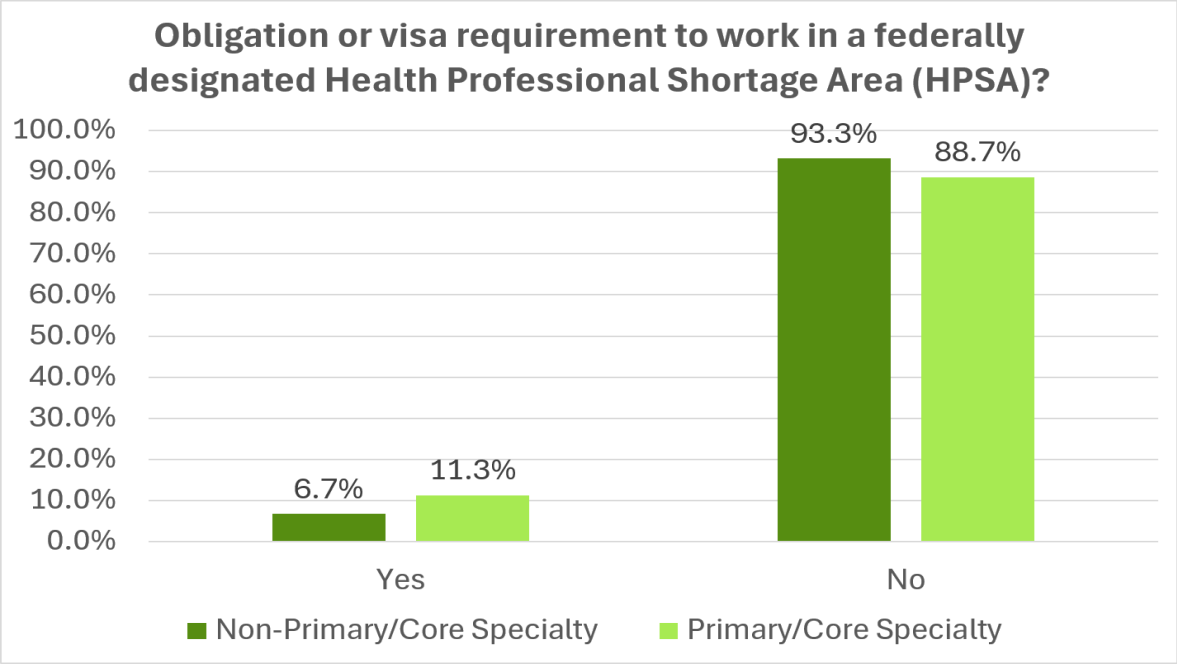
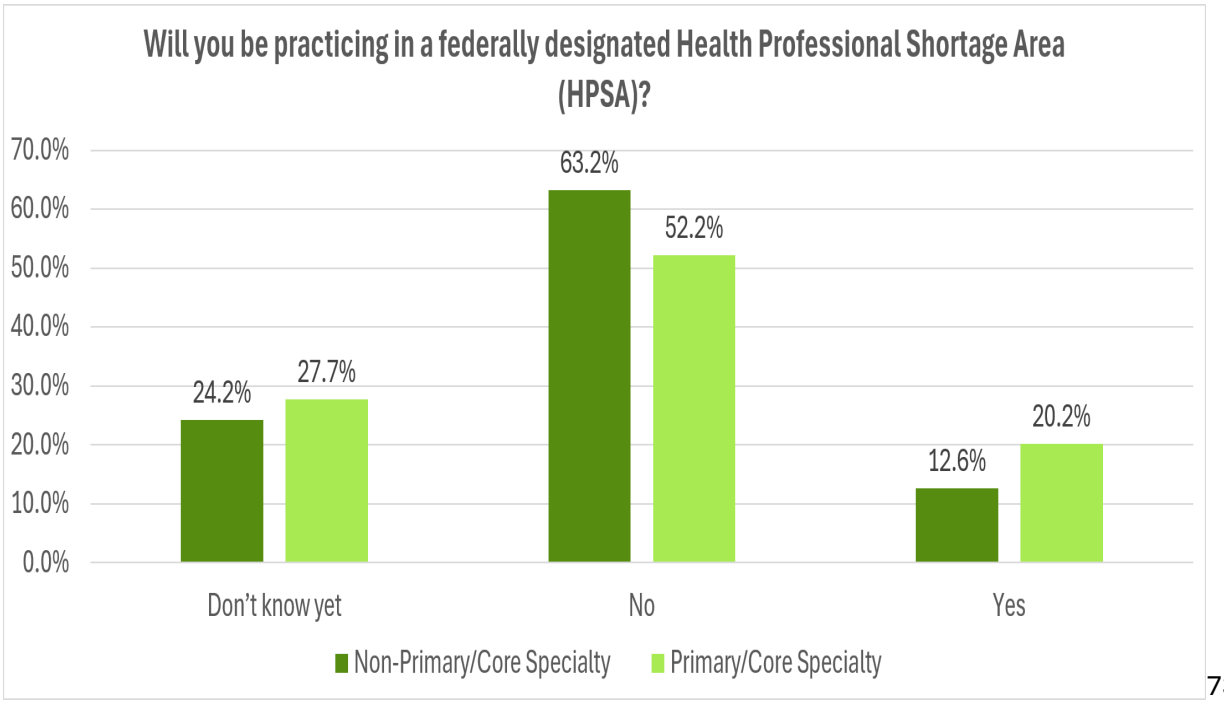


Figure 52: Will you be practicing in a federally designated Health Professional Shortage Area (HPSA)?



Acknowledgments

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This document is provided to the Georgia Board of Health Care Workforce members on behalf of Executive Director Chet Bhasin.

The Board would like to thank Georgia's Graduate Medical Education programs for their assistance with this survey.

Thank you to the Georgia Board of Health Care Workforce Board Members for their leadership and support.

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