

Profile of Georgia's Graduate Medical Education (GME) Graduates FY 2021 - FY 2025

Retention, Specialty, Education, Debt, and Practice Trends



January 2026

Executive Summary

This report answers key questions regarding graduates from Georgia's Graduate Medical Education (GME) programs. It draws on data from the Georgia Board of Health Care Workforce's (GBHCW) GME Five-Year Outcomes Reports and the GME Exit Survey Reports from fiscal years 2021-2025.

- GBHCW's GME Five-Year Outcomes Report tracks physicians who completed residency training in Georgia, examining their practice locations and retention trends over five years following graduation.
- GBHCW's GME Exit Survey is administered every year in the spring and captures information on demographics, practice location, specialty, education and debt, and perceptions of Georgia's GME programs.

This report provides answers to key questions, including:

- How many physicians graduated from Georgia's GBHCW-funded residencies in the past five years?
- Where did graduates of Georgia's residency programs complete high school and medical school?
- Which Georgia medical schools did physicians attend prior to completing their residency training?
- Do Georgia's GME program graduates stay in Georgia to practice?
- How much educational debt do Georgia's GME graduates carry?
- In which demographic areas do GME graduates plan to practice after completing their training?

How many physicians graduated from Georgia's GBHCW-funded residencies in the past five years?

Table 1: Distribution of GME Graduates Status, 2021-2025

Distribution of GME Graduates Status, 2021-2025

Year	Total Graduates	Attending Fellowship	Military Obligation	National Health Service Corps
2021	409	12	0	1
2022	439	17	7	2
2023	475	47	13	0
2024	476	98	8	0
2025	464	130	13	1
Total	2263	304	41	4

The table above presents a longitudinal summary of GME graduates' status after graduation from 2021 through 2025, detailing annual graduate counts alongside the number of individuals entering fellowships (13.4% of the total graduates), fulfilling military service commitments (1.8%), and those joining the National Health Service Corps (0.2%).

The number of graduating residents pursuing fellowships appears to be higher in recent years compared to earlier years. However, the data on graduates' statuses is as of 2025, so graduates in earlier years may have entered practice since their graduation year, even if they initially did enter a fellowship. This may account for why the number of reported fellows appears to decrease in earlier years.

Additionally, national data from the American Medical Association¹ indicate that an increasing proportion of residency graduates are pursuing fellowship training, particularly within Internal Medicine and Pediatrics.

¹ American Medical Association. 2025. "Considering Fellowship? Check in on the Latest Application Trends." https://www.ama-assn.org/medical-residents/medical-fellowships/considering-fellowship-check-latest-applicant-trends?utm_source

Table 2: Total Number of GME Graduates by Specialty, 2021-2025

Total Number of GME Graduates by Specialty, 2021-2025

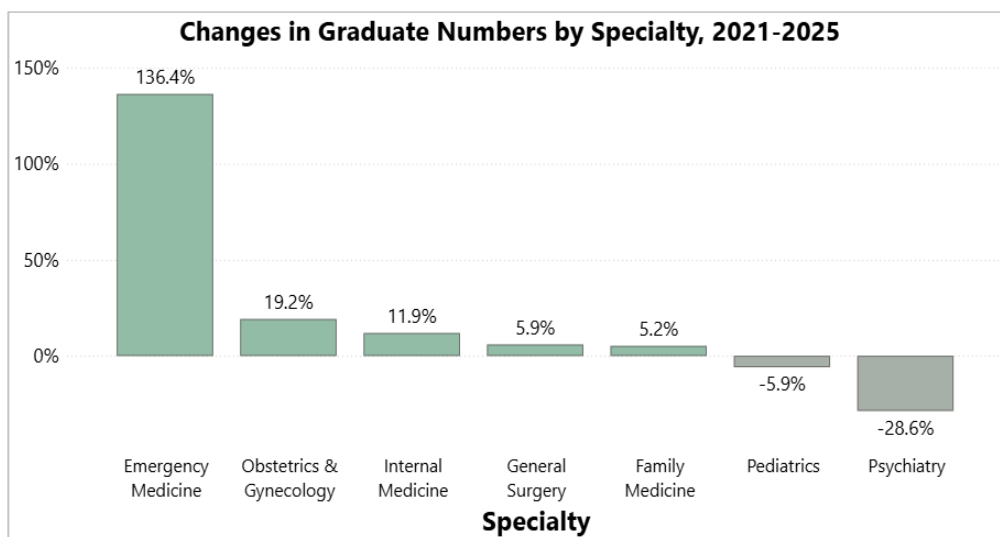
Year	Internal Medicine	Family Medicine	Pediatrics	OB/GYN	Psychiatry	Emergency Medicine	General Surgery	All Other Specialty	Total Graduates
2021	110	96	34	26	28	11	17	87	409
2022	105	95	35	28	23	26	18	109	439
2023	127	101	33	30	28	27	18	111	475
2024	124	97	36	28	33	26	16	116	476
2025	123	101	32	31	20	26	18	113	464
Total	589	490	170	143	132	116	87	536	2263

The table above and chart below highlight a few trends in graduates by specialty. One such trend is the overall growth of the training pipeline, as evidenced by the change from 409 graduates in 2021 to 464 in 2025 (a 13.4% increase).

Another evident trend is the uneven distribution of this growth across different specialties. In particular, Emergency Medicine, OB/GYN, and Internal Medicine have seen over 10.0% growth in graduates over the 5-year period. The doubling of Emergency Medicine graduates during the period reflects GBHCW's years-long investment in new programs and growth in the existing Emergency Medicine program.

Of particular concern, however, is the decrease in graduates in both Pediatrics and Psychiatry programs. In Psychiatry specifically, 3 of the 4 Psychiatry programs funded by GBHCW reported fewer graduates in 2025 than 2021. This comes amid the growing shortage of mental health professionals and the growing demand for psychiatric services in the United States².

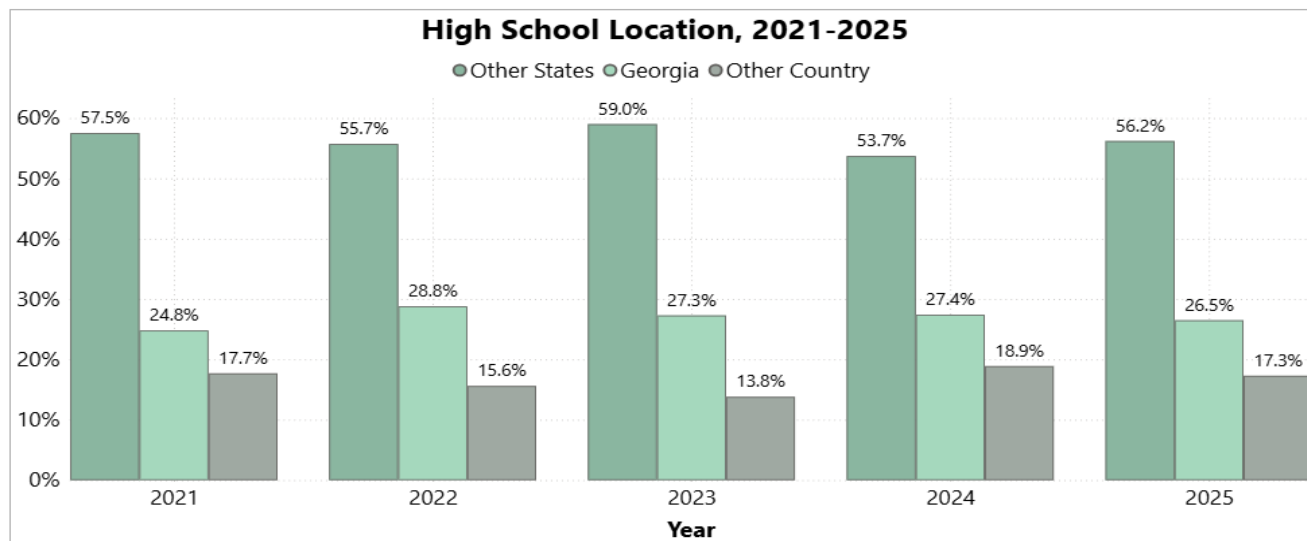
Figure 1: Changes in Graduate Numbers by Specialty, 2021-2025



² Association of American Medical Colleges. 2022. "A Growing Psychiatrist Shortage and an Enormous Demand for Mental Health Services." <https://www.aamc.org/news/growing-psychiatrist-shortage-enormous-demand-mental-health-services>

Where did graduates of Georgia's residency programs complete high school and medical school?

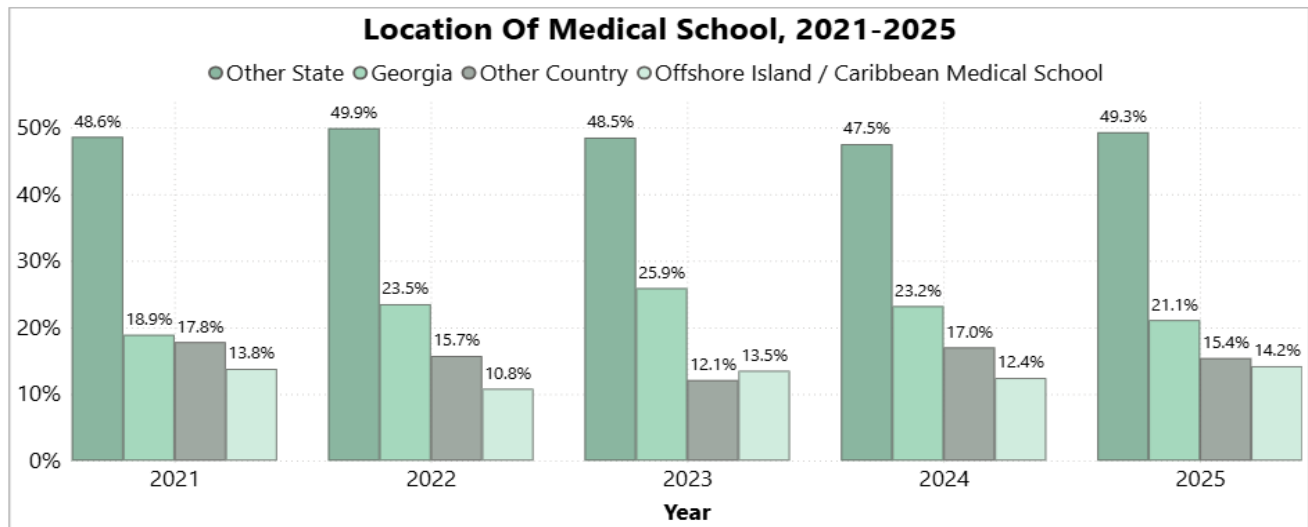
Figure 2: High School Location, 2021 -2025



Using data from the GME Exit Survey, the chart above presents a five-year longitudinal overview of where GME graduates completed high school: other states, Georgia, and other countries. It illustrates how the high school locations of GME graduates have shifted very little over the time period.

- Georgia high school graduates remain in the mid-20% range, with relatively minor fluctuations between 24.8% and 28.8%.
- The largest share of GME graduates is consistently those who completed high school in other states, ranging from 53.7% to 59.0%.
- The smallest share of GME graduates is consistently those who completed high school in other countries, varying between 13.8% and 18.9%, showing modest but noticeable year-to-year changes.

Figure 3: Location of Medical School, 2021-2025



Using data from the GME Exit Survey, the chart above presents a five-year overview of where GME graduates completed medical school.

- The percentage of GME graduates who completed medical school in Georgia ranges from 18.9% to 25.9%, showing growth from 2021 to 2023 but a decline afterward.
- GME graduates who completed medical school in other US states constitute the largest share (47.5%–49.9%) of Georgia GME graduates throughout all five years, showing relative stability with only small fluctuations.
- Offshore Island/Caribbean medical school graduates remain the smallest but stable group, hovering between 10.8% and 14.2%.
- The percentage of Georgia GME graduates who completed medical school in other countries varies between 12.1% and 17.8%, showing no clear long-term trend. The percentage peaks in 2021 and 2024 but dips in 2023.

Taken together, these findings indicate that Georgia’s GME programs have continued to attract a similar cohort of residents over the time period. Notably, Georgia’s GME programs have not significantly shifted their recruitment of graduates from Georgia high schools and medical schools.

One caveat for this data is that, though medical school graduates can express a preference for a certain GME program (in Georgia, for instance), they are subject to the NRMP Matching process, which may not align with students’ first choice. In 2025, for instance, an additional 111 (17.8%) of Georgia medical school graduates desired to stay in Georgia but did not match to a Georgia GME program³. Of these medical school graduates, 58 intend to practice in a primary care/core specialty.

³ Georgia Board of Health Care Workforce. 2025. “Medical School Graduate Survey Reports.” <https://healthcareworkforce.georgia.gov/main-publications-reports/data-publications/medical-school-graduate-survey-reports>

Which Georgia medical schools did physicians attend prior to completing their residency training?

The 2021–2025 data show overall growth in the number of Georgia medical school graduates completing GME programs in Georgia. However, the strength of the growth differs by Georgia medical school. Three schools, Medical College of Georgia, Mercer University School of Medicine, and Morehouse School of Medicine, demonstrate clear upward momentum, while Emory and PCOM Georgia follow more uneven paths, yielding comparatively smaller net gains.

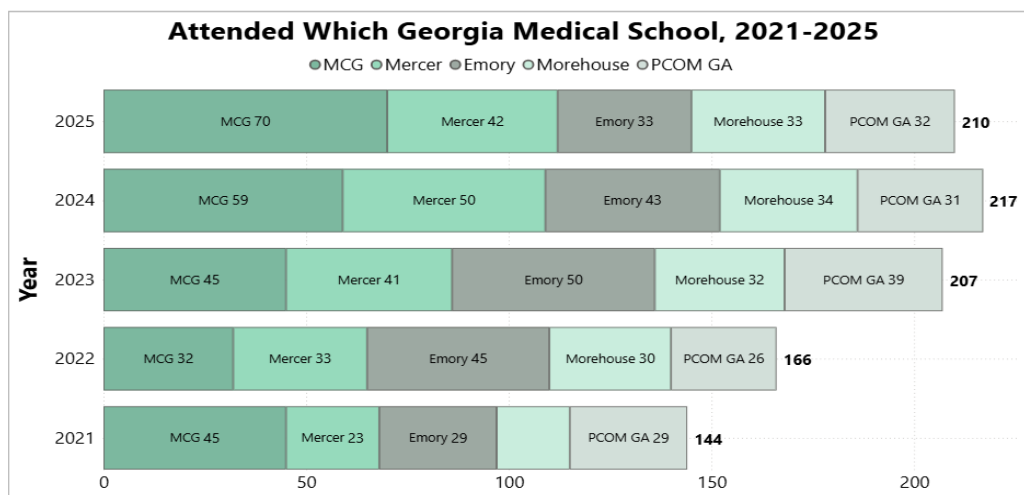
Table 3: GME Graduates by Medical School Location, 2021-2025

GME Graduates by Medical School Location, 2021-2025

Year	MCG	Mercer	Emory	Morehouse	PCOM GA	Out of State
2021	6.7%	3.4%	4.3%	2.7%	4.3%	78.7%
2022	4.9%	5.0%	6.8%	4.6%	4.0%	74.7%
2023	5.6%	5.1%	6.3%	4.0%	4.9%	74.1%
2024	6.3%	5.3%	4.6%	3.6%	3.3%	76.8%
2025	7.0%	4.2%	3.3%	3.3%	3.2%	78.9%
Overall Average	6.1%	4.6%	5.1%	3.6%	3.9%	76.7%

The table above displays where the GME graduates for each year attended medical school. Georgia medical school graduates make up between 21.1% and 25.9% of the graduating GME class for the years shown.

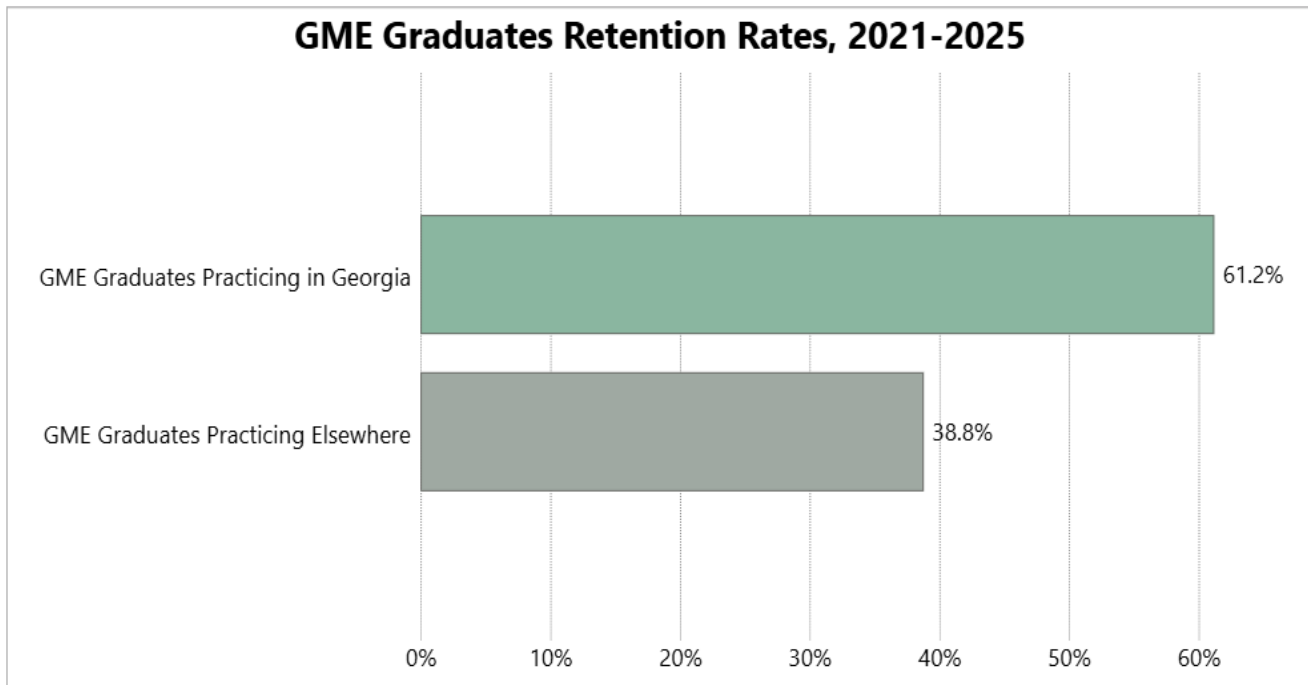
Figure 4: Attended Which Georgia Medical School, 2021-2025



Overall, Georgia GME program graduates who completed medical school in Georgia increased from 144 in 2021 to 210 in 2025 (a 45.8% increase). Medical College of Georgia had the highest increase in the number of graduates completing a Georgia GME program (an increase of 25), while Morehouse School of Medicine had the highest percentage increase in graduates completing a Georgia GME program (83.3% increase).

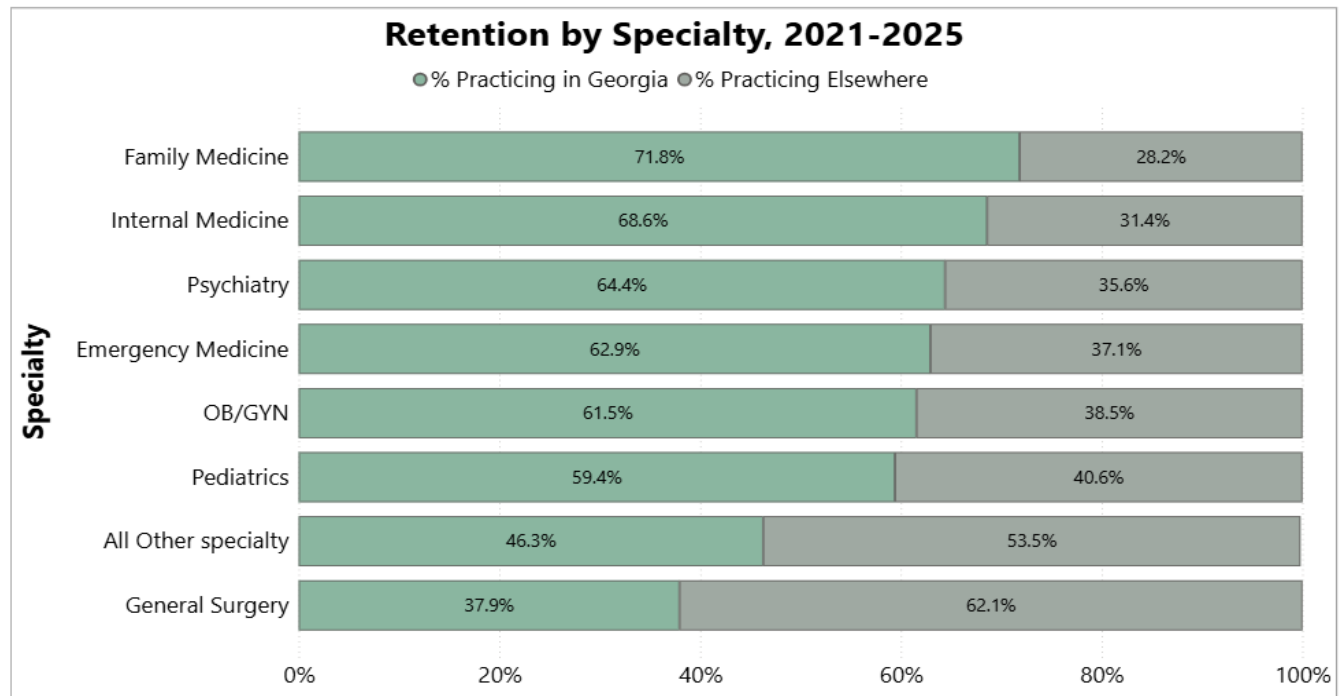
Do Georgia's GME program graduates stay in Georgia to practice?

Figure 5: GME Graduates Retention Rates, 2021-2025



Every year, GBHCW calculates GME retention rates for all graduates from funded programs in the past 5 years. The figure above, based on data for 2021-2025, shows that 61.2% of all Georgia residency program graduates remain in the state after completing their training. This includes 15.7% of graduates who went on to other residency or fellowship programs, entered military obligation, or participated in the National Health Service Corps with a Georgia address.

Figure 6: Retention by Specialty, 2021-2025

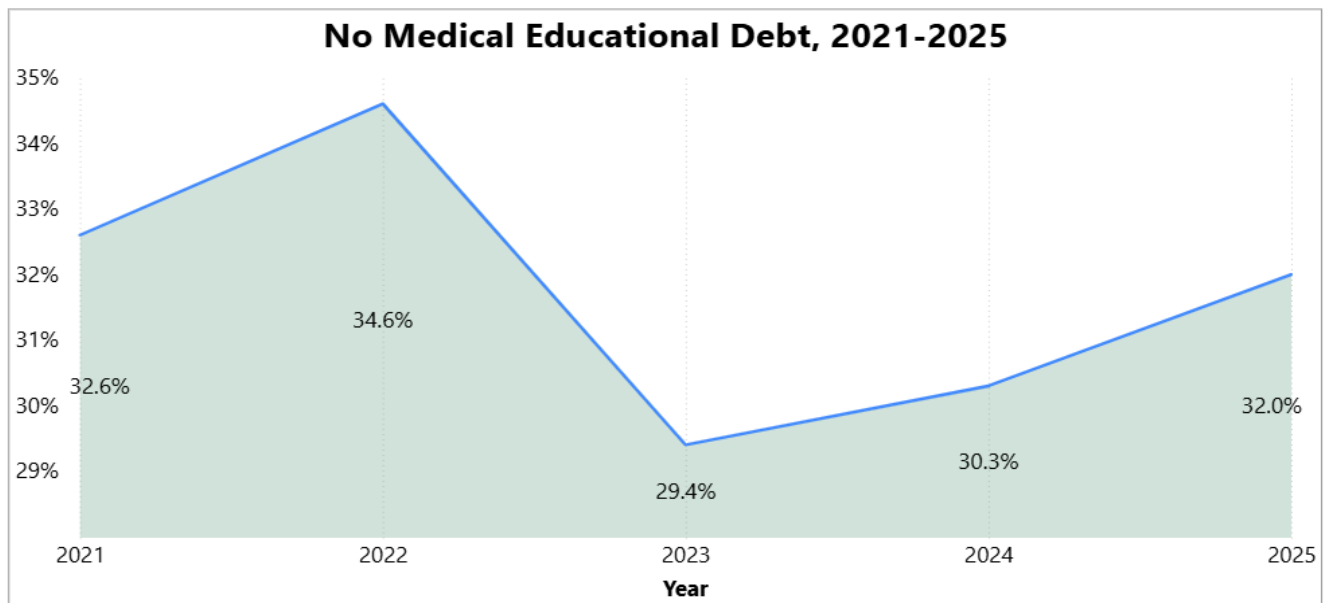


The figure above shows that Georgia retains about 65.8% of primary care/core physicians, with retention rates varying by primary care/core specialty. Family Medicine has the highest retention rate at 71.8%, followed by Internal Medicine at 68.6%. General Surgery has the lowest retention rate at 37.9% for the 2021-2025 time period.

How much educational debt do Georgia's GME graduates carry?

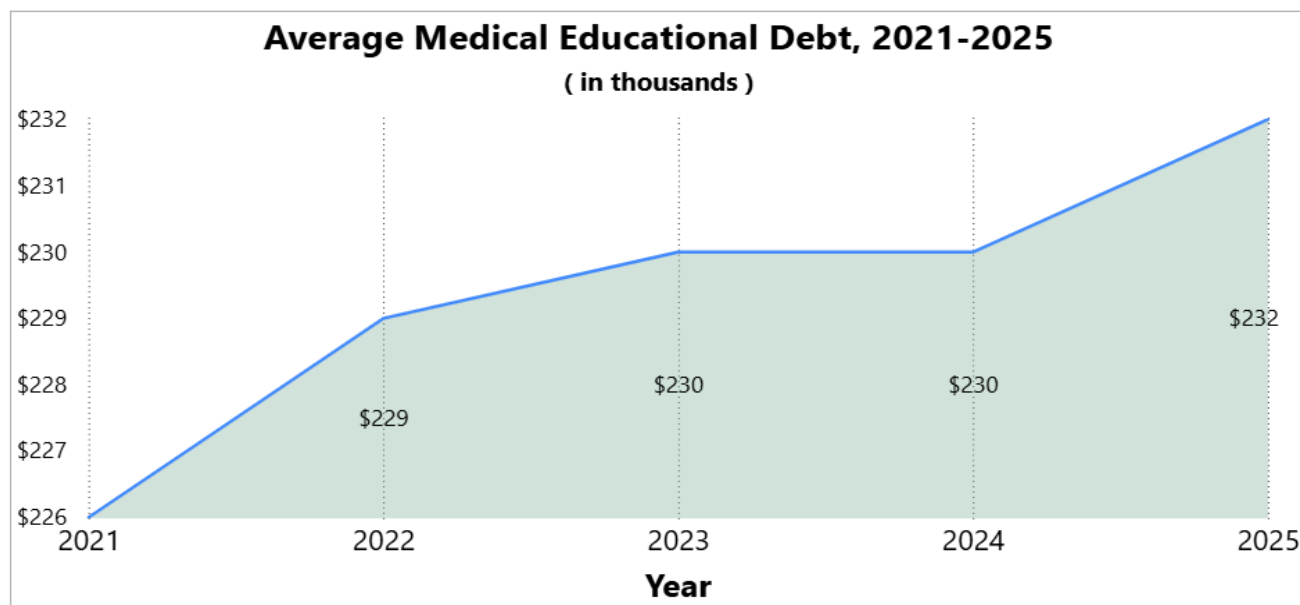
Every year, GBHCW conducts the Graduate Medical Education Survey, which asks residency and fellowship completers about the amount of educational debt (among other topics). The proportion of graduates without medical educational debt has remained relatively consistent over the five years, typically representing about one-third of all graduates. While the data reflects some year-to-year variation, these shifts may be attributed to evolving policies, economic factors, or changes in medical school funding structures.

Figure 7: No Medical Educational Debt, 2021-2025



2022 recorded the highest percentage of debt-free graduates at 34.6%, while 2023 saw a decline to 29.4%, the lowest in the period. The 2025 figure of 32.0% closely mirrors the 2021 rate of 32.6%, indicating that despite short-term fluctuations, there is no clear long-term trend.

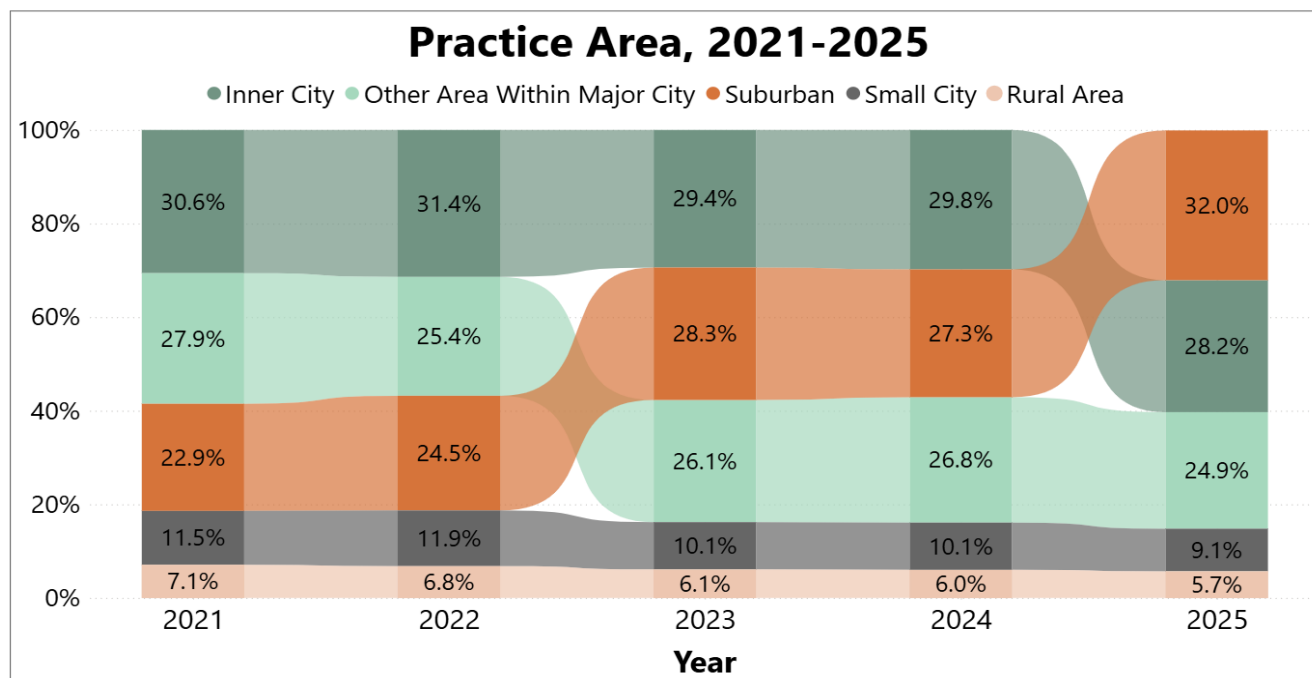
Figure 8: Average Medical Educational Debt, 2021-2025



Though the previous figure showed little change in the percentage of GME graduates having no debt, for those GME graduates who do carry some debt, the average medical educational debt has experienced a gradual yet steady increase over the past five years. The average medical debt has increased from \$226,000 to \$232,000 (2.7% increase) over the time period. Despite the modest scale of the percentage increase, the upward movement may indicate underlying factors, such as inflationary pressures or incremental hikes in tuition and associated costs. These trends underscore the ongoing need for enhanced financial support systems and policy attention to make medical education more accessible and affordable.

In which demographic areas do GME graduates plan to practice after completing their training?

Figure 9: Practice Area, 2021-2025



GBHCW's annual GME Exit Survey asks graduates about the demographic areas they intend to practice in, displayed in the figure above.

Suburban areas show the largest increase, rising from 22.9% in 2021 to 32.0% in 2025, making it the only planned practice area that has shown overall growth during the time period. Inner city, other area within major city, small cities, and rural areas have shown 2-3% declines during the time period. This trend is evidence of a suburbanization of medical practice following population growth in suburban areas.