Georgia Physician Assistant Workforce Report

Based on 2017-2018 Licensure Renewal Data

Georgia Board of Health Care Workforce

State of Georgia

Published July 2019

Acknowledgements

Georgia Board of Health Care Workforce
2017-2018 Physician Assistant Licensure Survey

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Executive Summary

The 2018 Physician Assistant Workforce report marks the 4th year the Georgia Board of Health Care Workforce (GBHCW) has examined the supply and distribution of Georgia's physician assistants using data from licensure renewals. The physician assistants' data are analyzed by the GBHCW and the resulting information is reported on a biennial basis.

- There are 3,810 physician assistants who are licensed, currently working, and practicing in a Georgia county.
- This renewal cycle includes 89 physician assistants who are newly licensed in the state of Georgia.
- There are 36.16 physician assistants per 100,000 population who are licensed, currently working, and practicing in the state of Georgia.
- The top three (3) practice settings for physician assistants are hospital-clinic (30%), other (19%), and multi-specialty physician groups (17%).
- Whites represent 80% of the physician assistant workforce, while Blacks represent 10.0%, Asians 6%, and other race 4%.
- White women make up the largest gender-race group, at 49% of the physician assistant workforce. White men make up the second-largest group, at 31%. All other gender-race groups (Asian men and women, Black men and women, and "other" race men and women) make up the remaining 20% of the physician assistant population in Georgia.
- 63% of the physician assistants identify as female; 37% identify as male.
- Physician assistants working in non-MSA counties are more likely to be female (54%) than male (46%).
- Approximately 75% of the physician assistant workforce is 50 years old or younger.
- Approximately 5% of the workforce plans to retire within 5 years.
- The top three (3) primary care/core specialties are Family Medicine (11%), Emergency Medicine (10%), and Internal Medicine (5%).
- There are 34 counties with no physician assistants, representing a population of 432,000, according to the Governor's Office of Planning and Budget's 2018 population estimate (opb.georgia.gov, derived from U.S. Census Bureau data).
- The three (3) counties with the highest rate of physician assistants per 100,000 people are Decatur (86.6), Thomas (83.2), and Fulton (83.2).
- Of counties that have a rate of more than zero (0) physician assistants per 100,000 people, those with the three (3) lowest rates are White (3.3), Jackson (2.8), and Polk (2.4).
- Of the entire physician assistant workforce, 84% report working full time; 16% report not working full time.
- 1,220 (32%) physician assistants report having a second practice location; 255 (7%) report having a third practice location.

Methodology

This analysis was conducted on physician assistant renewals or original applications from the Georgia Composite Medical Board during the years 2017-2018. The survey is not mandatory to renew the license. Some physician assistants answered some, but not all, questions on the survey. The Georgia Board of Health Care Workforce (GBHCW) compiles, validates, and analyzes data from the surveys to prepare a report on physician characteristics, supply, and demand. Analyses were performed using Microsoft Excel and IBM SPSS.

Data set exclusions: Physician assistants licensed during the years 2017 and 2018 in Georgia who answered they were not "currently working" or did not provide at least one Georgia county as a practice location.

Data set inclusions: Physician assistants licensed during the years 2017 and 2018, who answered that they were "currently working," and who reported at least one Georgia county as a practice location.

Count of total physician assistants: One license number corresponds to one physician assistant. The rate of physician assistants per 100,000 population was calculated using 2018 Census estimates of county population and the first practice county reported by each physician assistant licensure survey.

Physician Assistant Career Outlook

Physician assistants (PAs) partner with supervising physicians to practice medicine. Supervising physicians may delegate medical duties to physician assistants. Physician assistants perform a vital service to rural and underserved areas of Georgia where there is a shortage of practicing physicians. In doing so, physician assistants increase the quality and quantity of medical services in the state. The demand for physician assistants is on the rise and it is considered one of the fastest growing professions in the country.[1]

2019 nationwide Median salary: $108,610[2]

2018 Georgia Median Salary: $93,642[1]

Typical Education: Master's Degree including more than 2,000 hours of clinical rotations.[3]

Number of Jobs, 2018: 106,200 nationally.[2]

Job outlook, 2016-2026: 37% (much faster than average) [2]

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[1] Southeastern Primary Care Consortium, Inc. 2018. "Health Careers in Georgia." *Atlanta Area Health Education Center Health Careers.* http://docs.wixstatic.com/ugd/3e5211_40fe2dc452d84a56a705a2c0d9bd2e95.pdf

[2] Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor. 2018. "Physician Assistants." *Occupational Outlook Handbook* https://www.bls.gov/ooh/healthcare/physician-assistants.htm

[3] Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor. 2018. "Physician Assistants: How to Become One." *Occupational Outlook Handbook.* https://www.bls.gov/ooh/healthcare/physician-assistants.htm#tab-4

Table 1: 5-Year Age and Retirement Distribution

Age Grouping	Count	Number Retiring within 5 Years
<30	230	0
30-34	783	1
35-39	705	0
40-44	564	0
45-49	515	4
50-54	357	4
55-59	247	10
60-64	205	40
65-69	145	82
70-74	44	24
75-79	14	9
>80	1	0
Total	**3,810**	**174**

- The mean average age of PAs in this renewal cycle is 43.3 years old.
- The lowest value for age is 26, while the highest value is 82.
- 174 PAs, or 4.6% of the total, are planning to retire within 5 years.
- 26.6% of the PAs are age 50 or older, and 16.7% of those aged 50 or older plan to retire in 5 years.

Figure 1: Age and Retirement Distribution
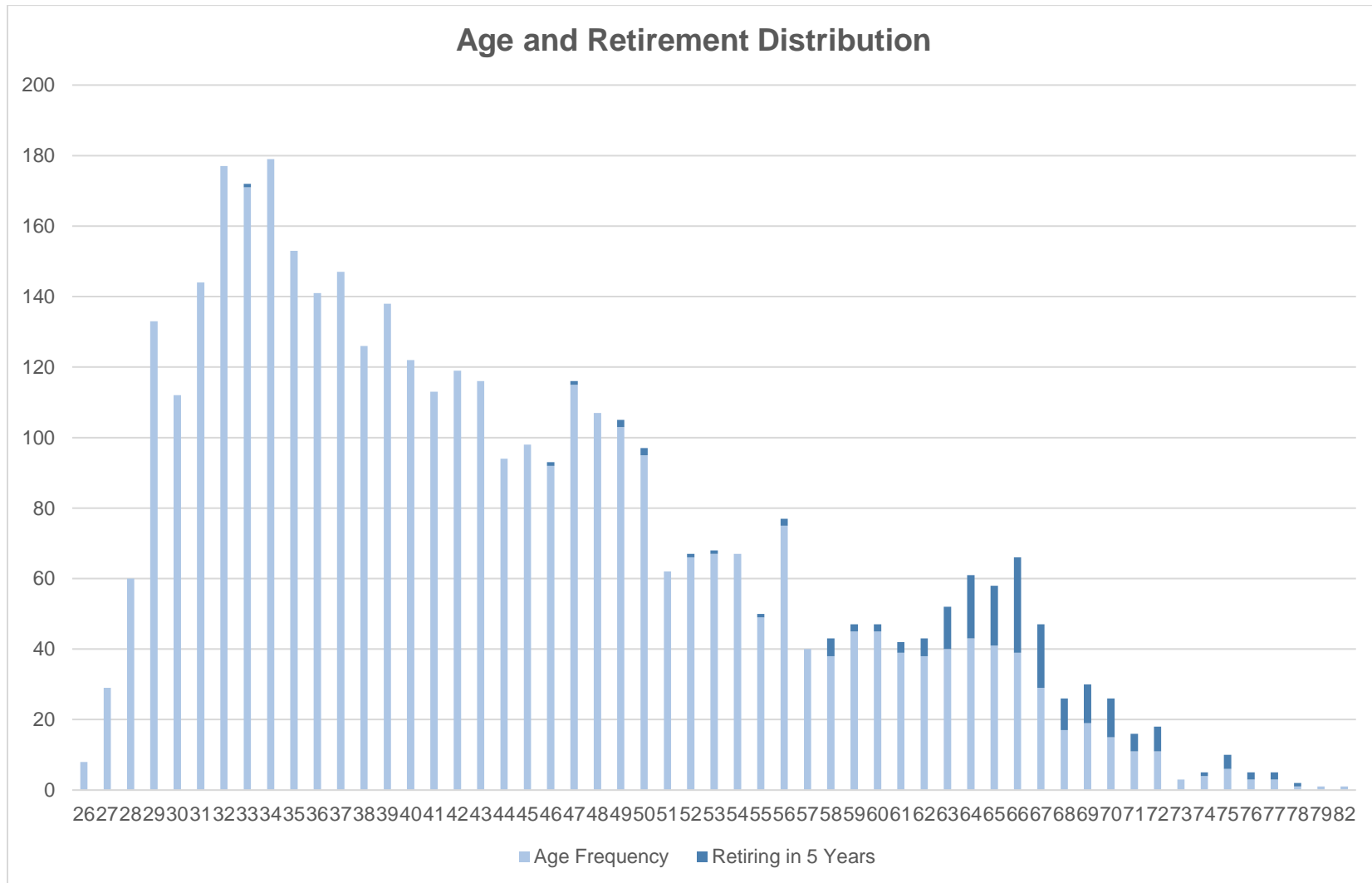
Age and Retirement Distribution

Figure 2: PA Race Distribution
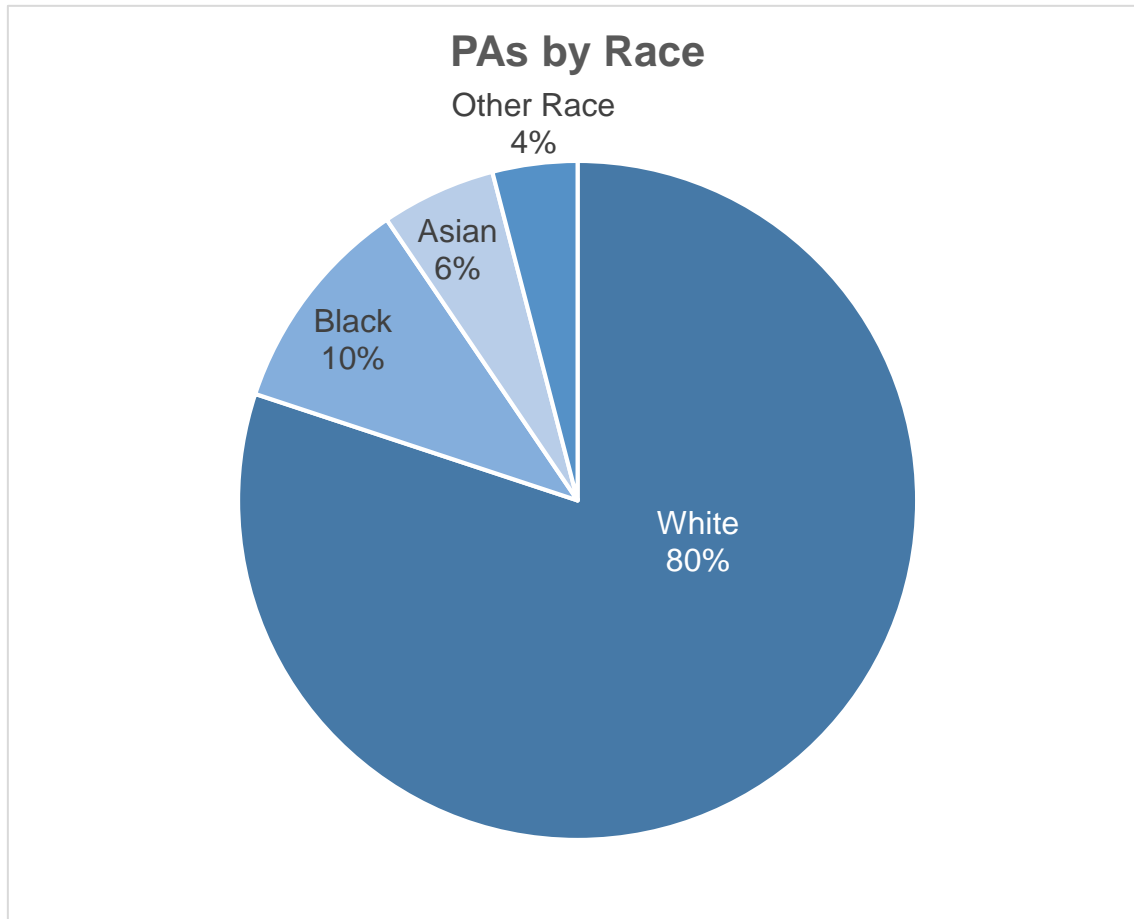
Table 2: PA Race Distribution

Response	Number	Percent
White	3,051	80.1%
Black	397	10.4%
Asian	208	5.5%
Other Race	154	4.0%
Total	**3,810**	**100.0%**

Figure 3: PA Gender Distribution

PAs by Gender
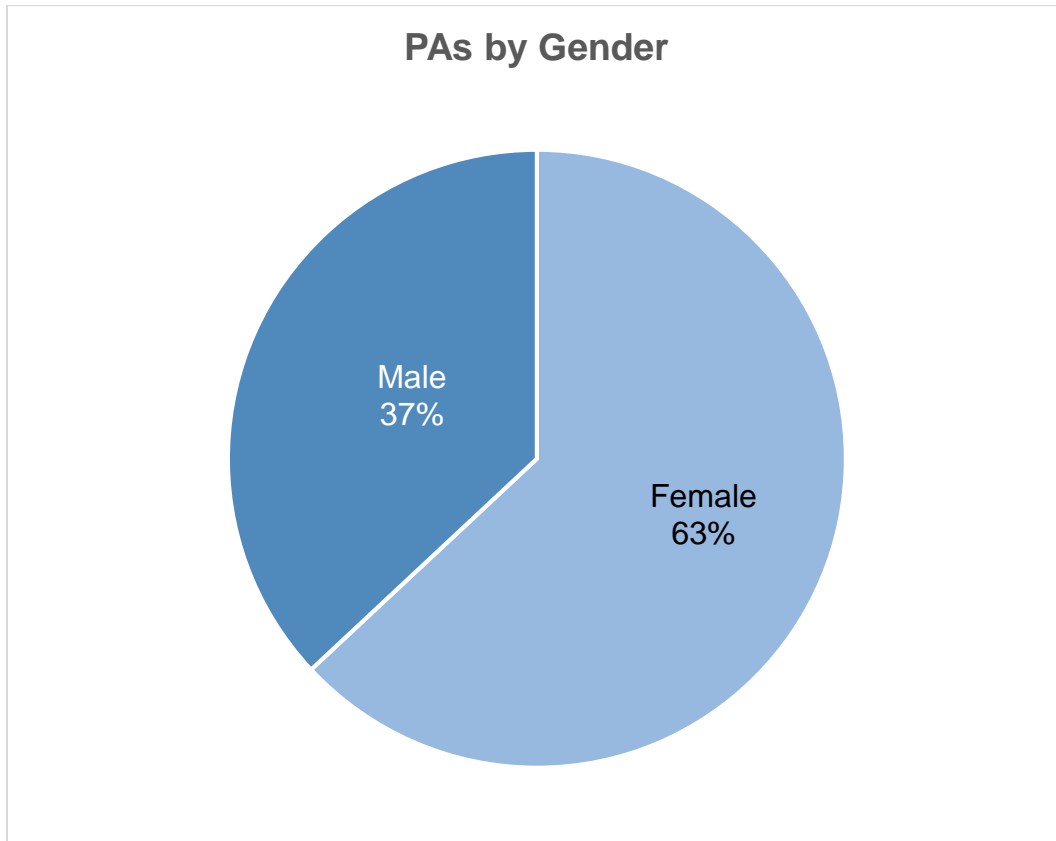
Table 3: PA Gender Distribution

Response	Number	Percent
Female	2,402	63.0%
Male	1,408	37.0%
Total	**3,810**	**100.0%**

Figure 4: PA Gender x Race Distribution

PA Gender x Race Distribution
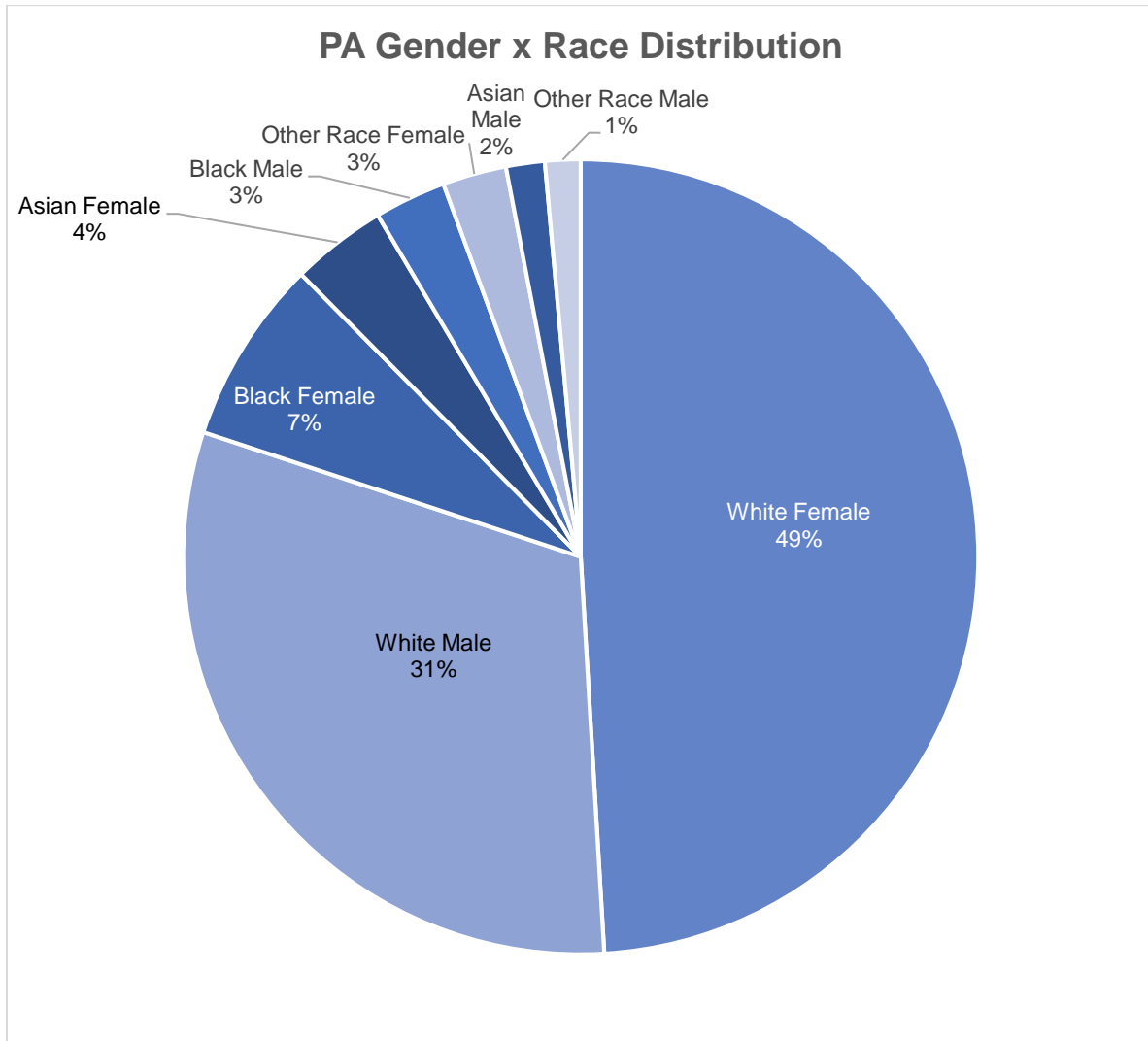
- White female PAs make up nearly 50% (1,869) of the total workforce for this renewal cycle.
- White PAs, both male and female, make up 80% of the entire workforce for this renewal cycle.

Table 4: PAs by Primary Care/Core Specialty and MSA Status of Location

Primary Care/Core Specialty	MSA		Non-MSA		Total by Specialty
	Count of PAs	Percent	Count of PAs	Percent	
Emergency Medicine	328	82.6%	68	17.1%	397
Family Medicine	326	76.2%	102	23.8%	428
Internal Medicine	177	82.7%	36	16.8%	214
Pediatrics	63	90.0%	7	10.0%	70
General Surgery	62	88.6%	8	11.4%	70
OB/GYN	38	82.6%	8	17.4%	46
Psychiatry	38	86.4%	6	13.6%	44
Total	**1,032**	**81.3%**	**235**	**18.5%**	**1,269**

- 81.3% of primary care/core specialty PAs practice in a MSA location, while 18.5% practice in a non-MSA.
- The primary care/core specialty with the highest MSA concentration is Pediatrics at 90.0%; the primary care/core specialty with the highest concentration in non-MSAs is Family Medicine at 23.8%.

Figure 5: PA Specialty Mix

PA Specialty Mix
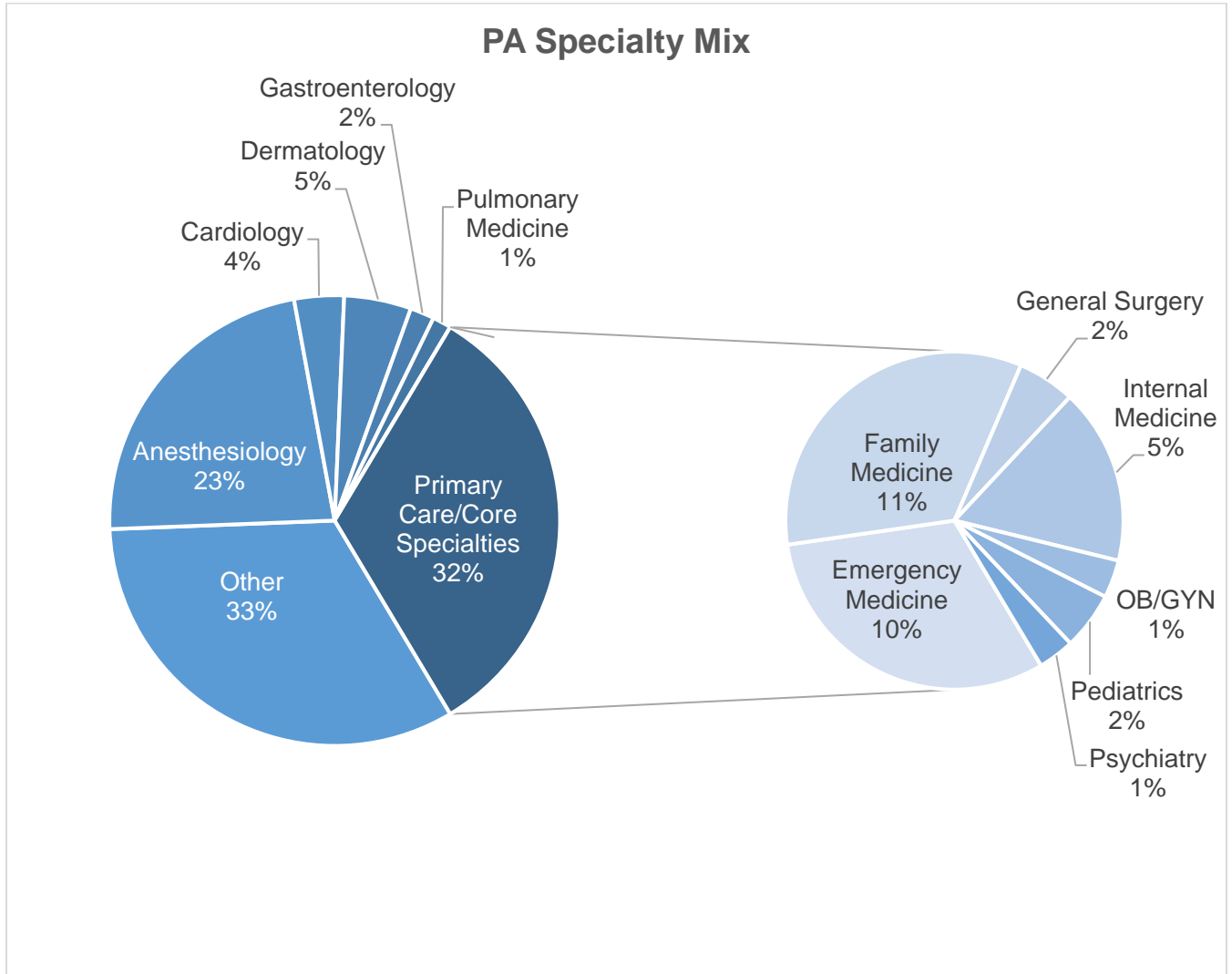
- The "Other" category includes Endocrinology, Geriatrics, Hematology, Infectious Disease, Nephrology, Neurology, Occupational Medicine, Pulmonary Medicine, Radiology, Rheumatology, and all other specialties.

Figure 6: PA Primary Care/Core Specialty as a Percentage of Total

PA Primary Care/ Core Specialty as a Percentage of Total
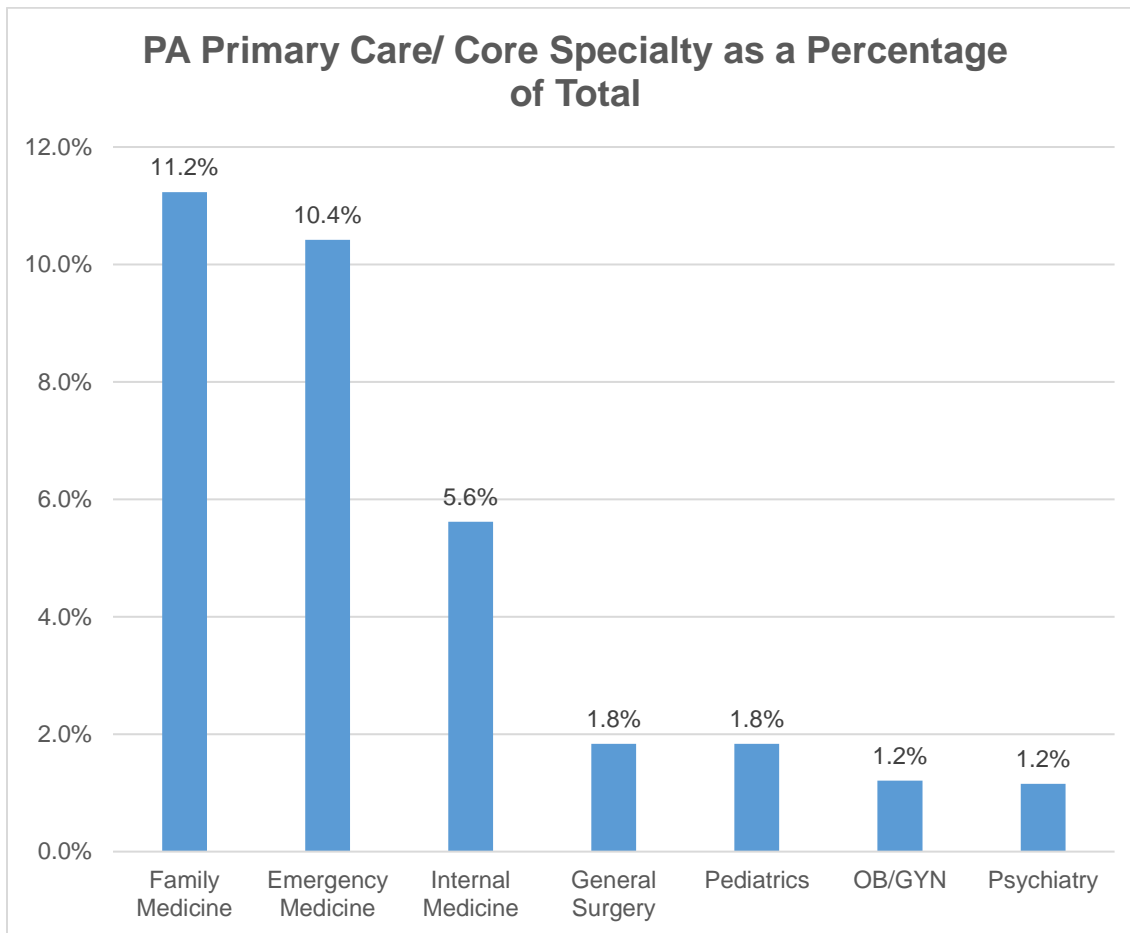
- The three largest PA primary care/core specialties are Family Medicine, Emergency Medicine, and Internal Medicine, which is consistent with the top three specialties in the 2016-2017 renewal cycle.

Table 5: Practice Setting Distribution

Practice Setting	Number	Percent
Hospital-Clinic	1,125	29.5%
Multi-Specialty Physician Group	648	17.0%
Solo Physician Practice	571	15.0%
Hospital-University	536	14.1%
Physician Practice Management Org	82	2.2%
Community Health Center	71	1.9%
College or University	30	0.8%
Nursing Home or LTC Facility	15	0.4%
HMO	13	0.3%
Home Health Agency	2	0.1%
Other	717	18.8%
Total	**3,810**	**100.0%**

Table 6: PA Primary Care/Core Specialty by Practice Setting

Core Specialty and Percent	College or University	Community Health Center	HMO	Home Health Agency	Hospital -Clinic	Hospital-University	Multi-Specialty Physician Group	Nursing Home or LTC Facility	Physician Practice Management Org	Solo Physician Practice	Other	Grand Total
Family Medicine	13	35	0	0	60	6	67	2	20	134	91	428
Percent	72.2%	64.8%	0.0%	0.0%	17.5%	5.6%	40.9%	33.3%	45.5%	52.3%	33.8%	33.7%
Emergency Medicine	1	2	3	1	179	78	17	0	10	12	94	397
Percent	5.6%	3.7%	42.9%	100.0%	52.2%	72.9%	10.4%	0.0%	22.7%	4.7%	34.9%	31.3%
Internal Medicine	3	11	1	0	41	13	30	3	11	59	42	214
Percent	16.7%	20.4%	14.3%	0.0%	12.0%	12.1%	18.3%	50.0%	25.0%	23.0%	15.6%	16.9%
General Surgery	0	0	0	0	24	5	29	0	2	4	6	70
Percent	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	7.0%	4.7%	17.7%	0.0%	4.5%	1.6%	2.2%	5.5%
Pediatrics	0	1	1	0	16	4	14	0	1	20	13	70
Percent	0.0%	1.9%	14.3%	0.0%	4.7%	3.7%	8.5%	0.0%	2.3%	7.8%	4.8%	5.5%
OB/GYN	1	3	2	0	10	0	4	0	0	15	11	46
Percent	5.6%	5.6%	28.6%	0.0%	2.9%	0.0%	2.4%	0.0%	0.0%	5.9%	4.1%	3.6%
Psychiatry	0	2	0	0	13	1	3	1	0	12	12	44
Percent	0.0%	3.7%	0.0%	0.0%	3.8%	0.9%	1.8%	16.7%	0.0%	4.7%	4.5%	3.5%
Grand Total	**18**	**54**	**7**	**1**	**343**	**107**	**164**	**6**	**44**	**256**	**269**	**1269**
Percent	1.4%	4.3%	0.6%	0.1%	27.0%	8.4%	12.9%	0.5%	3.5%	20.2%	21.2%	100.0%

- The largest percentage of PAs in Emergency Medicine, General Surgery, and Psychiatry work in a hospital/clinic setting. The largest percentage of Family Medicine, Internal Medicine, OB/GYN, and Pediatrics PAs work in a solo physician practice.

Table 7: Georgia Physician Assistants by County

County	PCSA	Total PAs	2018 Population	Rate per 100,000	Rank
Georgia	-	**3,810**	**10,519,475**	**36.16**	**-**
Appling	91	2	18,507	10.81	96
Atkinson	88	2	8,297	24.11	46
Bacon	90	0	11,185	0.00	126
Baker	76	1	3,092	32.34	33
Baldwin	47	4	44,823	8.92	106
Banks	10	0	18,988	0.00	126
Barrow	27	6	80,809	7.42	109
Bartow	17	14	106,408	13.16	84
Ben Hill	87	0	16,787	0.00	126
Berrien	85	4	19,252	20.78	53
Bibb	46	106	153,095	69.24	8
Bleckley	63	1	12,838	7.79	107
Brantley	93	0	18,897	0.00	126
Brooks	81	3	15,513	19.34	58
Bryan	52	6	38,109	15.74	75
Bulloch	53	21	77,296	27.17	37
Burke	50	3	22,423	13.38	82
Butts	37	3	24,193	12.40	88
Calhoun	76	4	6,352	62.97	12
Camden	96	13	53,677	24.22	44
Candler	55	1	10,836	9.23	104
Carroll	19	20	118,121	16.93	68
Catoosa	1	4	67,420	5.93	114
Charlton	95	1	12,968	7.71	108

County	PCSA	Total PAs	2018 Population	Rate per 100,000	Rank
Chatham	52	203	289,195	70.19	7
Chattahoochee	43	2	10,684	18.72	61
Chattooga	18	1	24,790	4.03	120
Cherokee	15	43	254,149	16.92	69
Clarke	27	85	127,330	66.76	9
Clay	76	0	2,887	0.00	126
Clayton	39	30	289,615	10.36	99
Clinch	83	2	6,648	30.08	35
Cobb	21	286	756,865	37.79	24
Coffee	88	15	43,093	34.81	29
Colquitt	78	6	45,592	13.16	83
Columbia	31	41	154,291	26.57	38
Cook	80	1	17,162	5.83	115
Coweta	41	51	145,864	34.96	28
Crawford	46	0	12,318	0.00	126
Crisp	65	4	22,601	17.70	65
Dade	1	0	16,226	0.00	126
Dawson	11	4	25,083	15.95	73
Decatur	73	23	26,575	86.55	1
DeKalb	23	356	756,558	47.06	18
Dodge	62	3	20,705	14.49	78
Dooly	66	1	13,706	7.30	110
Dougherty	76	48	91,243	52.61	14
Douglas	20	17	145,331	11.70	92
Early	71	5	10,247	48.79	16
Echols	82	1	4,000	25.00	43
Effingham	52	8	62,190	12.86	85
Elbert	29	0	19,120	0.00	126

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County	PCSA	Total PAs	2018 Population	Rate per 100,000	Rank
Emanuel	57	6	22,612	26.53	39
Evans	56	2	10,721	18.65	62
Fannin	4	3	25,964	11.55	93
Fayette	40	72	113,459	63.46	10
Floyd	18	62	97,927	63.31	11
Forsyth	13	89	236,612	37.61	25
Franklin	9	4	23,023	17.37	66
Fulton	22	874	1,050,114	83.23	3
Gilmer	3	3	30,816	9.74	103
Glascock	32	0	2,995	0.00	126
Glynn	93	36	85,219	42.24	20
Gordon	16	17	57,685	29.47	36
Grady	74	3	24,748	12.12	89
Greene	34	3	17,698	16.95	67
Gwinnett	25	224	927,781	24.14	45
Habersham	10	9	45,388	19.83	56
Hall	11	152	202,148	75.19	6
Hancock	33	1	8,348	11.98	90
Haralson	19	4	29,533	13.54	80
Harris	43	0	34,475	0.00	126
Hart	28	0	26,099	0.00	126
Heard	42	0	11,879	0.00	126
Henry	38	76	230,220	33.01	31
Houston	67	25	155,469	16.08	72
Irwin	86	1	9,398	10.64	98
Jackson	27	2	70,422	2.84	124
Jasper	36	7	14,040	49.86	15
Jeff Davis	89	0	15,029	0.00	126

| County	PCSA	Total PAs	2018 Population	Rate per 100,000	Rank
Jefferson	49	6	15,430	38.89	23
Jenkins	54	3	8,683	34.55	30
Johnson	48	1	9,708	10.30	100
Jones	46	0	28,616	0.00	126
Lamar	44	3	19,000	15.79	74
Lanier	84	2	10,340	19.34	57
Laurens	60	12	47,325	25.36	41
Lee	76	4	29,764	13.44	81
Liberty	52	20	61,497	32.52	32
Lincoln	31	0	7,915	0.00	126
Long	92	0	18,998	0.00	126
Lowndes	82	35	116,321	30.09	34
Lumpkin	12	7	32,955	21.24	52
Macon	66	2	13,143	15.22	76
Madison	27	1	29,650	3.37	122
Marion	43	0	8,351	0.00	126
McDuffie	32	4	21,531	18.58	63
McIntosh	93	1	14,340	6.97	112
Meriwether	42	0	21,068	0.00	126
Miller	72	0	5,686	0.00	126
Mitchell	76	8	22,192	36.05	27
Monroe	45	3	27,520	10.90	95
Montgomery	58	2	9,193	21.76	51
Morgan	27	1	18,853	5.30	117
Murray	2	2	39,921	5.01	119
Muscogee	43	85	194,160	43.78	19
Newton	36	12	109,541	10.95	94
Oconee	27	19	39,272	48.38	17

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County	PCSA	Total PAs	2018 Population	Rate per 100,000	Rank
Oglethorpe	27	1	15,054	6.64	113
Paulding	21	23	164,044	14.02	79
Peach	46	0	27,297	0.00	126
Pickens	14	8	31,980	25.02	42
Pierce	94	1	19,389	5.16	118
Pike	37	2	18,634	10.73	97
Polk	18	1	42,470	2.35	125
Pulaski	64	0	11,069	0.00	126
Putnam	35	2	21,809	9.17	105
Quitman	70	0	2,279	0.00	126
Rabun	7	2	16,867	11.86	91
Randolph	70	1	6,833	14.63	77
Richmond	31	160	201,554	79.38	4
Rockdale	24	23	90,594	25.39	40
Schley	68	0	5,236	0.00	126
Screven	51	1	13,938	7.17	111
Seminole	72	0	8,315	0.00	126
Spalding	37	15	66,100	22.69	50
Stephens	8	1	26,035	3.84	121
Stewart	69	1	6,199	16.13	71
Sumter	68	5	29,733	16.82	70
Talbot	43	0	6,272	0.00	126
Taliaferro	30	0	1,608	0.00	126
Tattnall	56	6	25,391	23.63	48
Taylor	46	0	8,039	0.00	126
Telfair	61	3	15,876	18.90	60
Terrell	76	0	8,611	0.00	126
Thomas	75	37	44,448	83.24	2

County	PCSA	Total PAs	2018 Population	Rate per 100,000	Rank
Tift	79	32	40,571	78.87	5
Toombs	58	11	26,887	40.91	22
Towns	6	5	11,852	42.19	21
Treutlen	60	0	6,809	0.00	126
Troup	42	13	70,034	18.56	64
Turner	79	1	7,912	12.64	87
Twiggs	46	0	8,188	0.00	126
Union	5	9	24,001	37.50	26
Upson	44	6	26,215	22.89	49
Walker	1	7	69,410	10.09	101
Walton	26	5	93,503	5.35	116
Ware	94	21	35,680	58.86	13
Warren	32	1	5,251	19.04	59
Washington	48	2	20,386	9.81	102
Wayne	92	6	29,808	20.13	55
Webster	69	0	2,611	0.00	126
Wheeler	59	1	7,879	12.69	86
White	11	1	29,970	3.34	123
Whitfield	2	25	104,062	24.02	47
Wilcox	64	0	8,812	0.00	126
Wilkes	30	2	9,876	20.25	54
Wilkinson	46	0	9,036	0.00	126
Worth	77	0	20,299	0.00	126

Map 1: PAs per 100,000 Population, by County
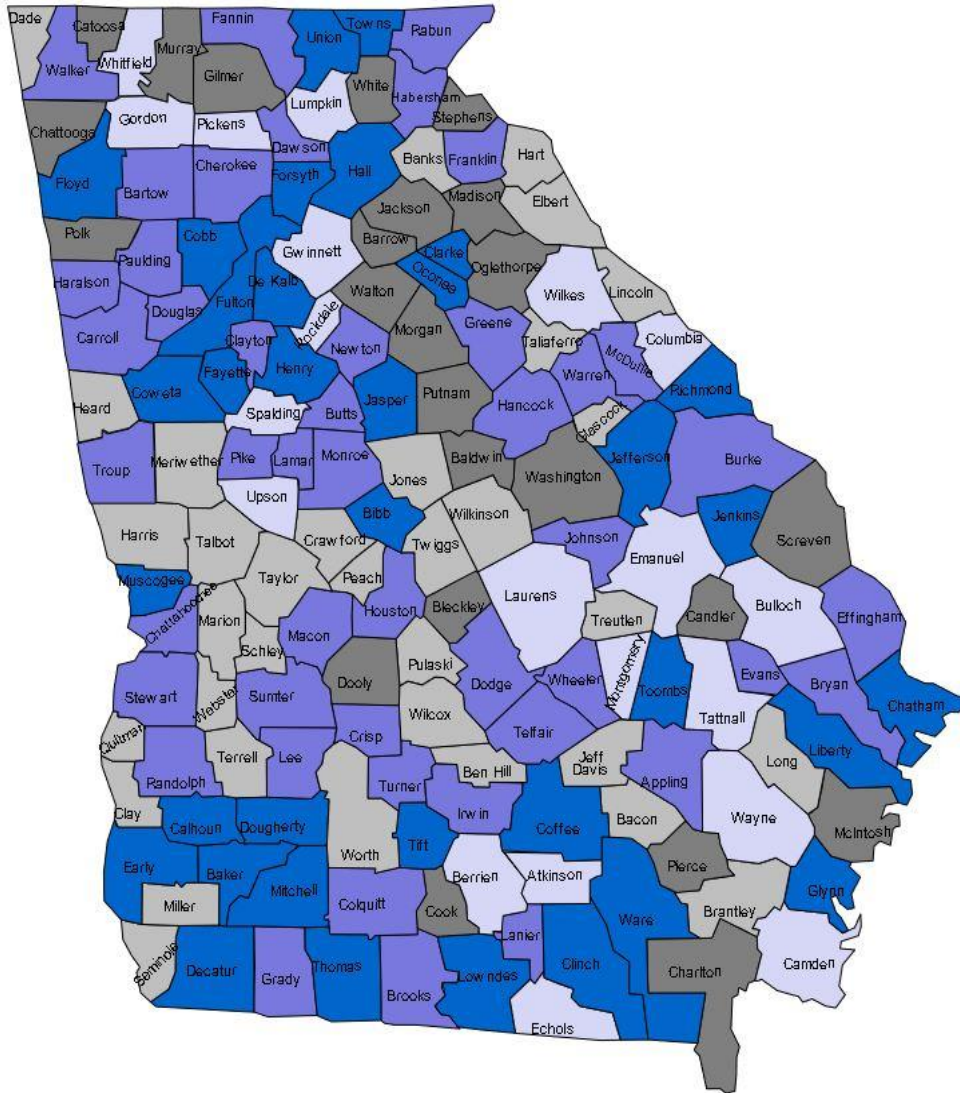
Rate of Physician Assistants Per 100,000	Number of Counties
0	34
0-10	24
10-20	46
20-30	20
30-84	35

- There were 34 counties with no physician assistants. This represents a population of 432,000.
- For the state of Georgia, the average number of physician assistants per 100,000 people is 36.16.

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Map 2: PAs per 100,000 Population, by MSA Status
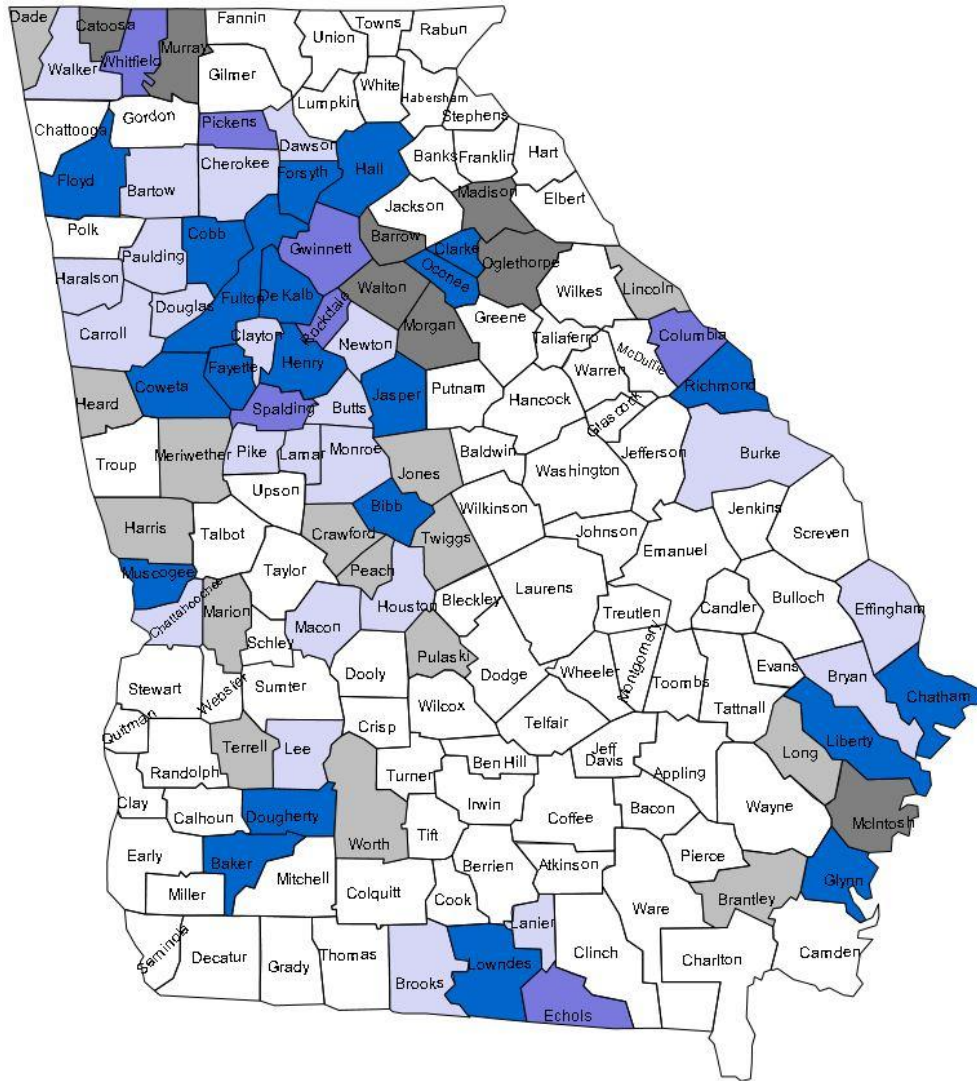
Rate of Physician Assistants Per 100,000	Number of Counties
0	15
0-10	8
10-20	23
20-30	7
30-84	21
Non-MSA	85

- The color is null (white) for non-MSA counties.
- There were 15 counties in MSAs with no physician assistants. This represents a population of 254,207.
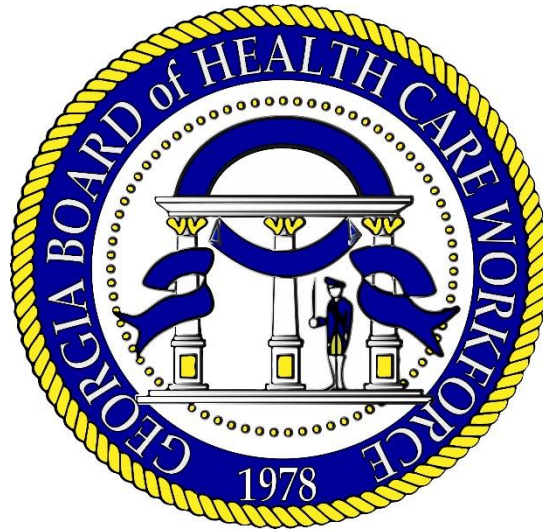
The 2017-2018 Physician Assistant Licensure Survey document can be viewed and downloaded on the internet at gbpw.georgia.gov.

The Georgia Board of Health Care Workforce welcomes comments and suggestions for future editions of this report. Please send comments to leanna.greenwood@dch.ga.gov.