

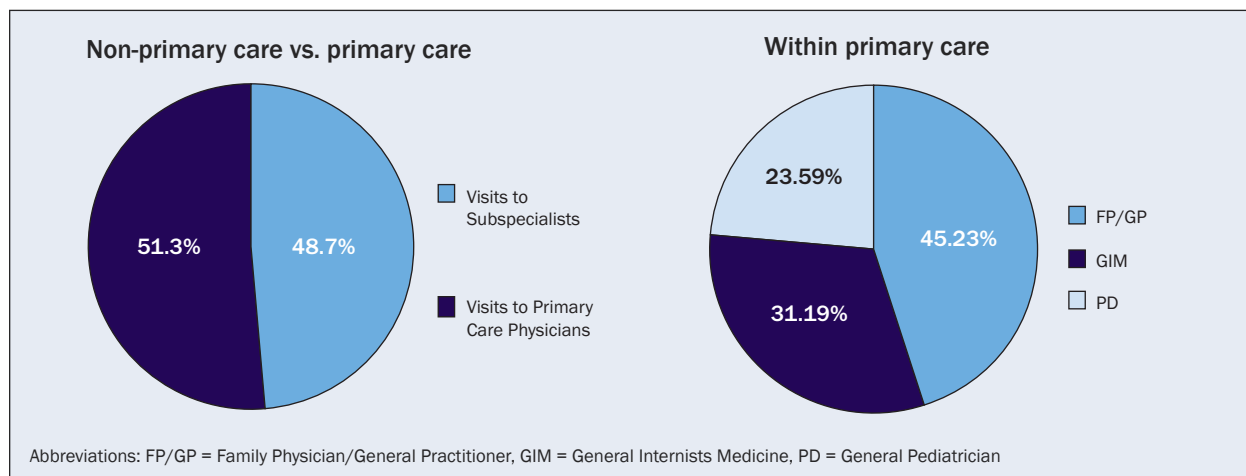
# Primary Care Workforce Facts and Stats No. 1

## The Number of Practicing Primary Care Physicians in the United States

**SUMMARY:** In 2010, there were approximately 209,000 practicing primary care physicians in the U.S., according to research commissioned by the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality.

Of the 624,434 physicians in the United States who spend the majority of their time in direct patient care, slightly less than one-third are specialists in primary care. Primary care physicians consist of family physicians and general practitioners, general internists, general pediatricians, and geriatricians. Of the nearly 956 million visits that Americans made to office-based physicians in 2008, 51.3% were to primary care physicians.<sup>1</sup>

### Visits to office-based physicians, non-primary care vs. primary care and within primary care, 2008



According to the 2010 American Medical Association Physician Masterfile, there are slightly more than 246,000 primary care physicians in the United States. This number, however, overestimates the number of practicing physicians and needs to be adjusted because the AMA Physician Masterfile includes some retired physicians and others who have left the workforce and a substantial number of primary care trained physicians now practice in non-primary care settings, including as hospitalists and in emergency departments. After adjusting for these two factors, the number of practicing primary care physicians in the U.S. is estimated to be approximately 209,000.

### U.S. practicing primary care physicians, 2010

	Primary care physicians in direct patient care*	Adjusting for retirement	Percent estimated to be practicing	Practicing primary care physicians
FP	87,650	84,033	95%	79,831
GER	3,260	3,157	95%	2,999
GP	11,883	9,557	100%	9,557
GIM	93,655	89,359	80%	71,487
PD	49,642	47,297	95%	44,933
Total	246,090	233,403		208,807

\*From the AMA Physician Masterfile 2010

Abbreviations: FP = Family Practice, GER = Geriatrics, GP = General Practice, GIM = General Internal Medicine, PD = General Pediatrics



*This is the first in a series being produced by the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality's (AHRQ) Center for Primary Care, Prevention, and Clinical Partnerships to further inform policy discussions around the U.S. primary care workforce. Information is based on a comprehensive primary care workforce analysis conducted by the Robert Graham Center for AHRQ. Visit <http://www.ahrq.gov/research/pcworkforce.htm> for more in the Primary Care Workforce Facts and Stats series.*

## **Reference**

1. National Center for Health Statistics. Health, United States, 2010: With Special Feature on Death and Dying. Hyattsville, MD. 2011.



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