



MERCER
UNIVERSITY

SCHOOL OF MEDICINE

medicine.mercer.edu

Strengthening the Health Care Workforce and Ensuring Access to Care

**Health Innovations Taskforce
National Conference of State Legislatures
Savannah, Georgia
January 13, 2023**

***Jean R. Sumner MD, FACP
Dean
Mercer University School of Medicine***

The Future of Health Care

Patient Centered

High Quality

Accessible

Affordable

Efficient



The Health Care Workforce Strategic Plan through the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA).

Required by the CARES Act, the plan focuses on four goals:

- expanding supply;
- ensuring equitable distribution;
- improving quality; and
- enhancing the use of data and evidence to improve program outcomes

Seeks to increase the health workforce in rural and underserved areas.
The plan focuses on physicians, nurses, and behavioral health providers.

Nov. 1, 2021 Julie Kozminski

Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) HHS workforce

Health Care Workforce

Physicians

Nurses

Pharmacists

Mental Health Providers

Public Health

Telehealth



Workforce Data: A Continued Problem

Problem:

Not a requirement to complete the survey and therefore data is incomplete.

Solution:

Require the licensure survey for all health professions related to actual practice, location, employer and hours worked.



Mission



To educate physicians and health professionals to meet the primary care and health care needs of rural medically underserved areas of Georgia.

Health Care Access in Rural Georgia

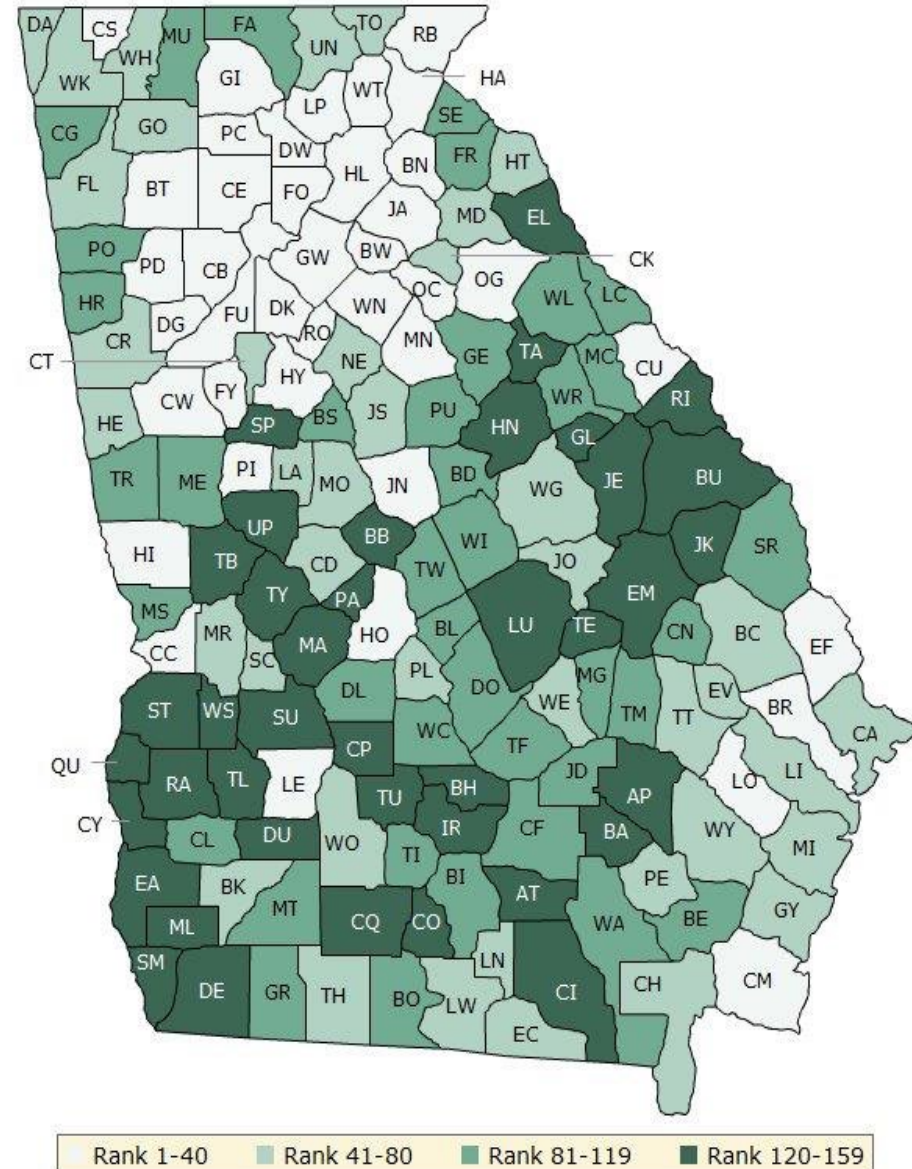
Longevity:

How long people live

Quality of Life:

How healthy people feel

Economic development



Rural Practice

Grew up rural

Positive Experience with a rural provider



Mission Driven

Accelerated Track:

- Family Medicine
- Internal Medicine
- Pediatrics

Future Possible:

- Psychiatry
- OB-GYN

Nathan Deal Scholars



Admissions

2017 Admissions:

- Academics
- Mission Potential
- Personality

2019 Admissions:

- Mission
- Attributes
- Academic Qualifications



The Decline in Rural Medical Students

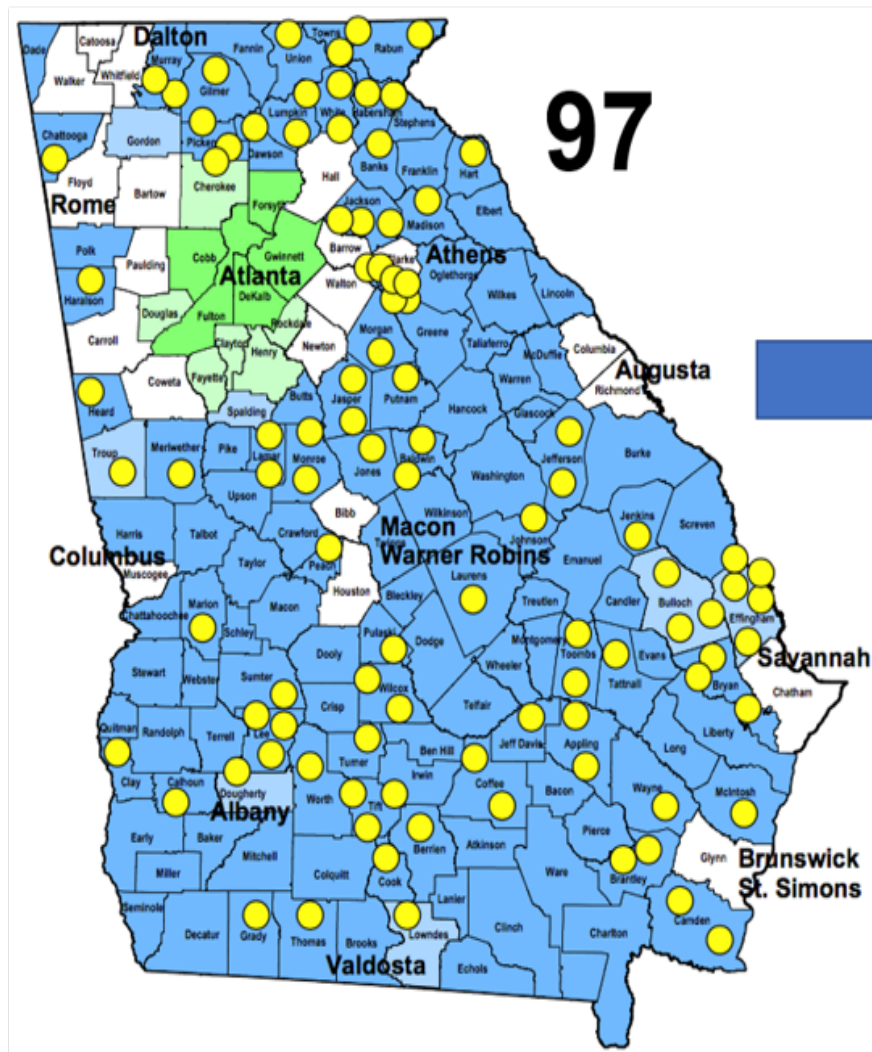
Students from rural areas **declined** **by 28%** between 2002 and 2017
This decline occurred when the overall number of medical students increased by 30%.

In 2016 and 2017, students from rural areas were 4.3% of total

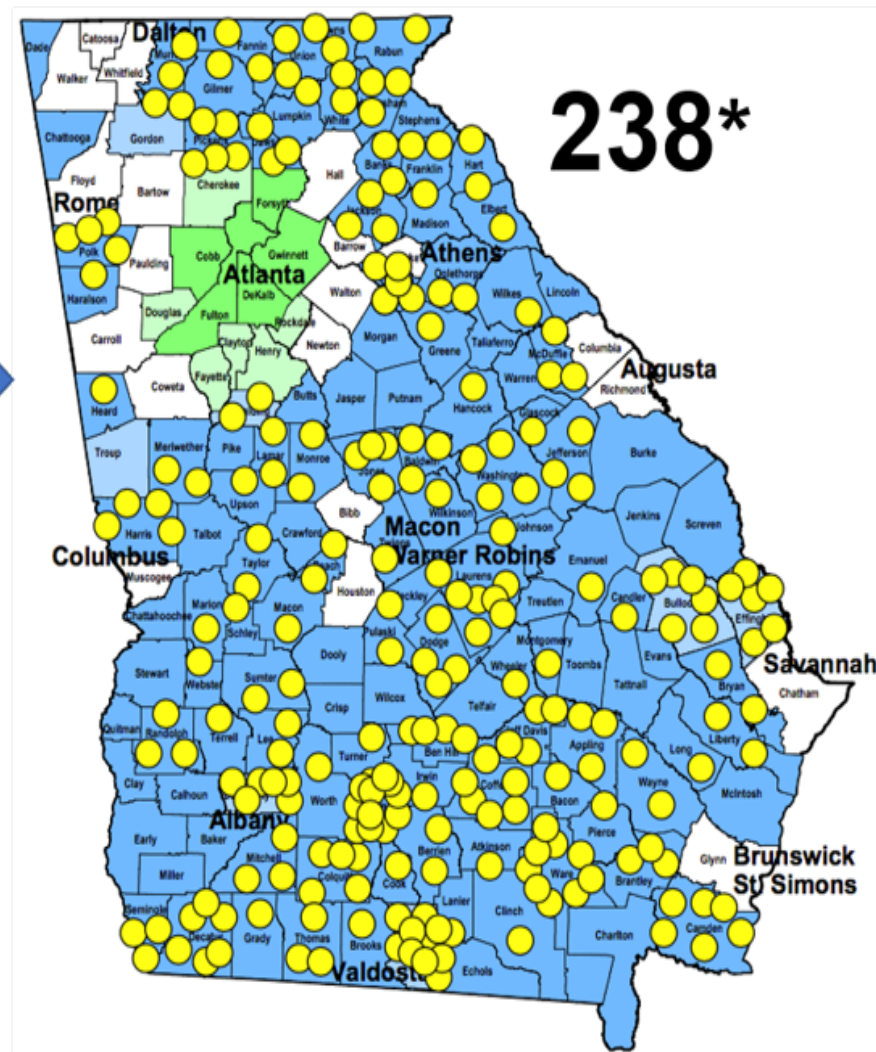
Health Affairs Dec.2019; 38 (12) Scott Shipman, MD,
AAMC director of primary care initiatives and clinical innovations.



2014-2015-2016-2017



2019-2020-2021-2022*



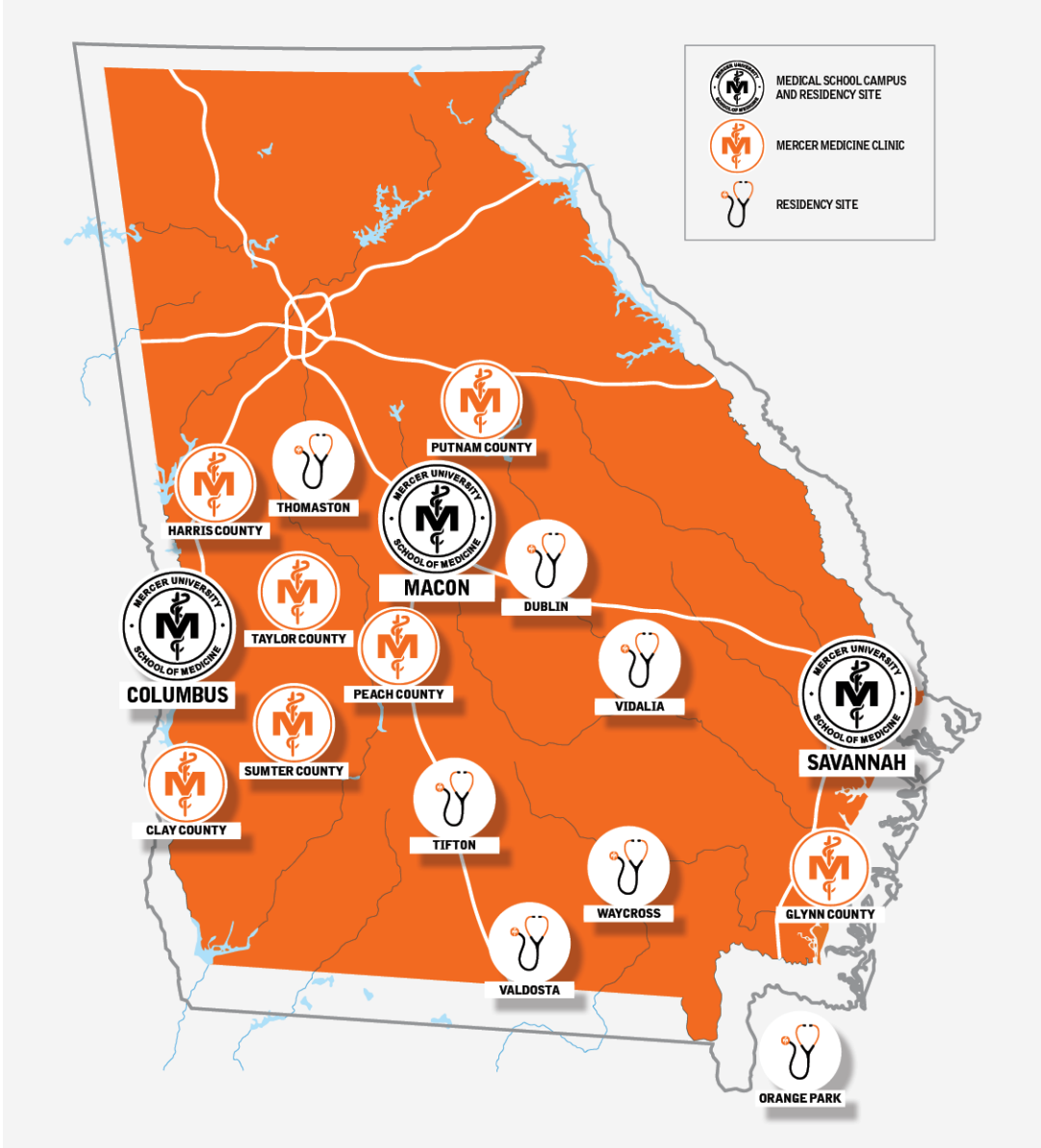
**In progress (~275 expected)*



MERCER Medicine



MERCER MEDICINE PLAINS



Nursing

Unique body of knowledge

Scientific Inquiry

Experiential Learning

Ethical Foundations



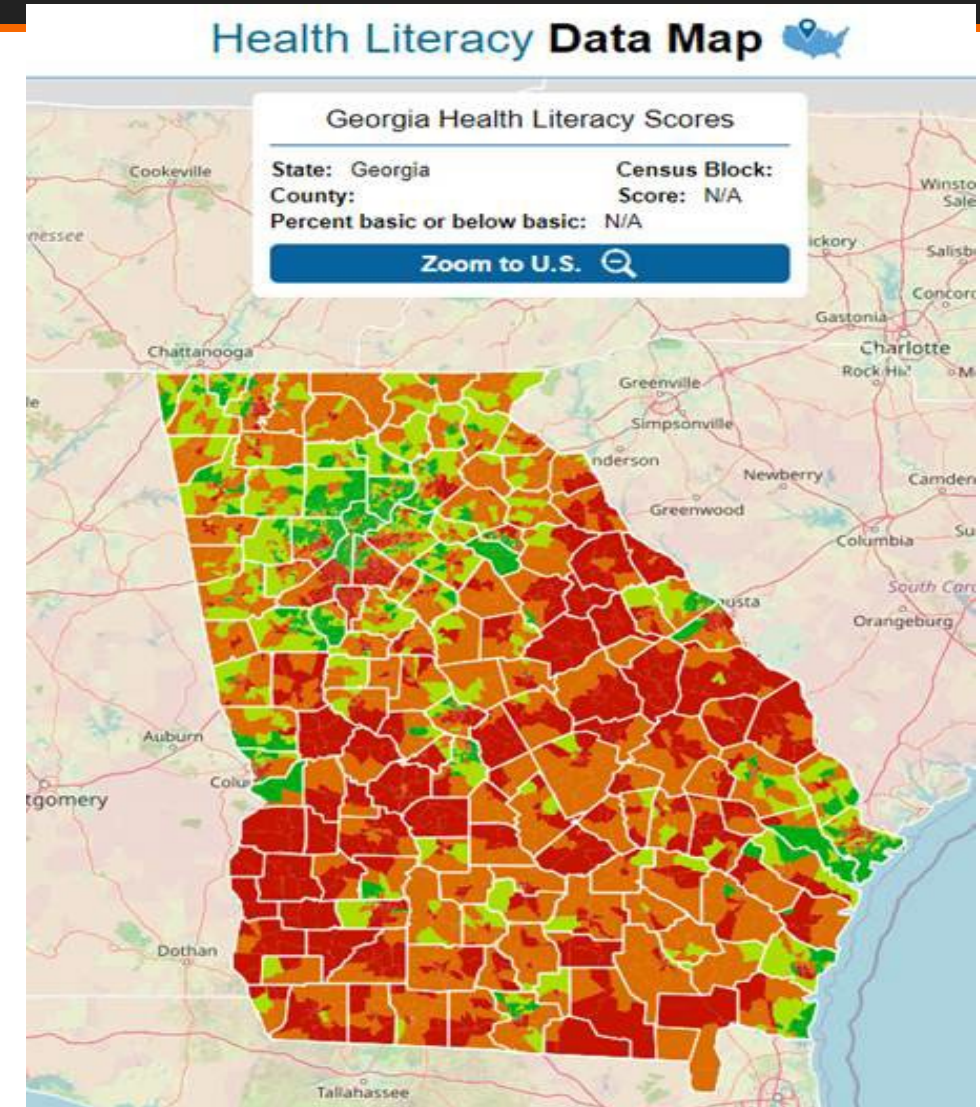
Nursing

Experts in Patient Care

Patient Advocates

Patient Educators

Continuity



Nursing Workforce

Nursing Assistants

LPN

Associate Degree

Three-year degree

Baccalaureate

Master's

DNP



Nurse Patient Ratio

12% higher in hospital mortality

7% higher 60-day mortality

7% increased readmission rate first 60 days

Longer lengths of stay

Sepsis protocols were beneficial but described as “markedly smaller” compared to staffing.

AJC.49(2021)868-873.

There has been a rapid growth of the advanced practice nursing workforce, particularly nurse practitioners (NPs).

Auerbach et al., 2018.

“...interest in becoming a NP was associated with a reduction of about 80,000 RNs from the nursing workforce between 2010 and 2017, (Auerbach et al., 2020).”

Buerhaus, P. (September/October 2021). Current Nursing Shortages Could Have Long-Lasting Consequences: Time to Change Our Present Course. *Nursing Economics*, 39(5), 247-250.

The nursing workforce will lose more than 2 million years of nursing experience each year between 2020-2030 as the remaining estimated 640,000 Baby boomer RNs retire.

The exit of RNs resulted in a striking loss of clinical and organizational experience, judgment, leadership, mentorship, relationships with physicians and administrators, and nurses who knew how to overcome barriers to get things done for patients

Buerhaus, P. (September/October 2021). Current Nursing Shortages Could Have Long-Lasting Consequences: Time to Change Our Present Course. *Nursing Economics*, 39(5), 247-250.

Pharmacists

2032, the U.S. could see a shortage of as many as 55,200 primary care physicians.

American Association of Medical Schools: 2019

Pharmacists may be part of a solution:

90% annual health care expenditures are for people with chronic and mental health conditions.

\$1,000 per patient per year with pharmacist interventions for patients with chronic conditions.

Pharmacy and Medically Underserved Areas Enhancement Act

Could pharmacists' prescribing for minor ailments through protocols relieve pressure on emergency rooms?



Pharmacy and Medically Underserved Areas Enhancement Act

April 2021

Bipartisan with original co-sponsor Rep. Buddy Carter

House of Representatives: Bill # 2759

Senate: Bill #1362

Allows provider status under Medicare for
pharmacists in medically underserved areas

1. Defers to state law
2. 80-85% fee
3. HPSA/MUA

Mental Health Providers



Ben Hill County Mental Health Initiative

Four Public Schools:

Primary, Elementary Middle, and High School

Students: licensed professional counseling
GPT and CPA

Georgia Rural Health Innovation Center

Mental Health Providers

CSBs: Agree on deliverables for every county served and show evidence of provision

Gateway CSB:

Same day appointments

Emergency waiver for EMS

Outstanding quality of care



Public Health

159 counties in Georgia

159 Health Departments

Maternal health service in every county at least monthly

Partner with OB-Gyn Residencies or regional physicians to provide this service

Trial with Georgia OB-GYN residencies or FM/ fellowship in maternal care

12 counties without doctors: must provide primary care services in those counties



Rural Hospitals Matter

Dr. Dennis Ashley Atrium Navicent Health, surgery residents and Dr. Anne Montgomery at the GRHIC

Study of 120 isolated traumatic head injuries with bleeding

80 % falls/ 16% MVA

9 hours in ER

4 Days in the Hospital

1.5 days in ICU





SCHOOL OF MEDICINE

THANK YOU