



The Scope of Family Medicine

Family physicians: Your trusted healthcare advisor, for life.

Family medicine's cornerstone is an ongoing, personal patient-physician relationship focusing on integrated care. In the increasingly fragmented world of healthcare, one thing remains constant: a continuous and comprehensive relationship between a patient and their family physician.

- Family physicians provide the majority of care for America's underserved populations and are distributed more proportionally than any other specialty.¹
- As part of their three-years of residency, family physicians participate in integrated inpatient and outpatient learning in six major medical areas: pediatrics, obstetrics and gynecology, internal medicine, psychiatry and neurology, surgery and community medicine.^{1,2}
- Family physicians also receive instruction in many other areas during residency, including geriatrics, emergency medicine, ophthalmology, radiology, orthopedics, otolaryngology, and urology.^{1,2}
- Family physicians deliver a range of acute, chronic and preventive medical services while providing patients with a patient-centered medical home.¹
- Delivery-related outcomes between family physicians and obstetricians/gynecologists have been studied for four decades and have shown little or no difference in the outcomes of family physicians practicing obstetrics compared to Ob/Gyns in low risk pregnancies.³
- A recent study went further comparing delivery-related complications without any risk adjustments and concluded that family physicians practicing obstetrics have comparable delivery related complications as Ob/Gyns when looking at 19 common delivery complications.³
- Without the Family Physician workforce, the loss of access to maternity services in economically disadvantaged communities will likely widen the health disparities in the United States.⁴
- In a 2017 survey of North Carolina family medicine residents, 73 percent of the respondents said they would either leave or at least strongly consider leaving the state if they could not find a position with their desired scope of practice.

The Ask

- Consider how to provide family physicians a broader scope of practice, including OB, if desired.

Footnotes:

¹A Description of the Specialty of Family Medicine, American Academy of Family Physicians, www.aafp.org.

²Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education Program Requirements for Graduate Medical Education in Family Medicine.

³Avery, DM; Waits, Shelley, Parton, JM. "Comparison of Delivery-Related Complications Among Obstetrician-Gynecologists and Family Physicians Practicing Obstetrics." American Journal of Clinical Medicine, Winter, 2014.

⁴Taylor, JT; Hartman, SG; Meunier, MR; Panchal, B; Pecci, CC; Zink, NM & Shields, SG. "Supporting Family Physician Maternity Care Providers." *Family Medicine*. Vol. 50, No. 9, 662, October 2018