

1849 The Exchange
Suite 200
Atlanta, GA 30339
678.303.9290
800.282.0224
Fax 678.303.3732
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Contact: Tom Kornegay with MAG at 404.405.2433/tkornegay@mag.org or Wes Clarke with the Carl Vinson Institute of Government, University of Georgia at 706.542.6202/wclarke@cviog.uga.edu

STUDY FINDS PRIVATE PRACTICE PHYSICIANS' OFFICES ACCOUNT FOR 180,000 JOBS AND \$20 BILLION IN ECONOMIC ACTIVITY IN GEORGIA

ATLANTA – Private practice physicians' offices in Georgia will account for more than 180,000 jobs, \$10 billion in wages, and nearly \$20 billion in economic activity in 2008, according to a study by the Carl Vinson Institute of Government at the University of Georgia in Athens. The full report is available at www.mag.org.

“Physician practices are businesses, and they affect the economy in much the same way a manufacturing plant does,” says M. Todd Williamson, M.D., a Lawrenceville-based neurologist who was sworn in as president of the Medical Association of Georgia (MAG) on October 4. “We create jobs, we generate revenue, and we purchase goods and services. But beyond that, we maintain a healthy and productive workforce.”

Dr. Williamson stressed that the study was limited to private practice physicians. “Include hospital-based physicians, and the economic impact that physicians have on this state is even more significant,” he says. *The Estimated Economic Impact of Private Practice Physicians' Offices in Georgia* report was commissioned by MAG. The findings were generated by the institute's faculty and staff using the Georgia Economic Modeling System (GEMS).

The report predicts that by 2020 the economic activity of Georgia's private practice physicians will increase to nearly 270,000 jobs, \$17.8 billion in wages, and more than \$32 billion in total economic output. It also says that each private practice physician in Georgia today supports 13 additional jobs, \$640,000 in wages for those jobs, and nearly \$1.5 million in total economic activity. “That means that the economic impact associated with private practice physicians is about half of Georgia's construction industry and equal to the insurance and financial systems in the state combined,” Dr. Williamson says.

The report also found that state and local governments in Georgia will collect \$2.8 billion in revenue as a result of the economic activity of private practice physicians' offices in 2008. Dr. Williamson points out that, “Private practice physicians generate one out of every 20 dollars in the state budget.”

The overall number of physicians in Georgia is expected to grow from the current 18,500, but the report says that the state may nonetheless face a shortage of 2,500 physicians by 2020 given the state's growing populous. The report says that adding 500 physicians each year beginning in 2016 would stimulate the economy in a significant way and expand access to health care services. The report concludes that if Georgia's medical graduate capacity is increased to mitigate the projected physician shortage, the economic output of private practice physicians could grow to nearly \$35 billion by 2020.

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