



# INDIANA'S CONTRACEPTIVE CARE WORKFORCE: CURRENT STATE AND OPPORTUNITIES

## INTRODUCTION

Hormonal contraceptives, traditionally available by prescription from a primary care or maternal health practitioner, are an effective method of preventing unwanted pregnancy.<sup>1</sup> Many states, including Indiana, are facing shortages of primary care providers (including obstetrician-gynecologists), leaving a provider gap, especially in rural and underserved communities. One strategy states are adopting to expand patient access to contraception is by broadening pharmacists' statutory authority to not only dispense, but also prescribe hormonal contraceptives.<sup>2</sup> Indiana recently passed House Enrolled Act 1568, authorizing its pharmacists, who meet certain criteria, to prescribe hormonal contraceptive patches and self-administered oral contraceptives.<sup>3</sup> An assessment of state health workforce data related to the supply of primary care and maternity care providers (those currently authorized to prescribe medications, including contraceptives) is critical to understand the current landscape of potential access points for contraceptive services. This brief outlines these data points in Indiana to support state policy discussions addressing potential gaps in care.

## METHODOLOGY

A map was generated to demonstrate the distribution of primary care, maternity care, and pharmacist providers in the state of Indiana. Several sources of data were used, including primary care health professional shortage areas, and supplemental data obtained from Indiana physicians, advanced practice registered nurses, and pharmacists during license renewal.<sup>4</sup>

**Primary Care Health Professional Shortage Areas (HPSAs)** are federally designated geographic areas with a shortage of primary care physicians. HPSAs use four criteria, population-to-provider ratio, percent of population below 100% Federal Poverty Level (FPL), infant health index and travel time to the nearest source of care outside the HPSA designated area.<sup>5</sup> Primary care HPSAs are displayed on the map as county-level hashmarks.

**Maternity Care Practitioner Capacity** is an application of the population-to-provider ratios used to identify Maternity Care Target Areas (MCTAs), or geographic areas within HPSAs that also have a shortage of maternity care health professionals. Maternity care practitioners include physicians with a specialty in obstetrics and gynecology and advanced practice registered nurses that are certified nurse midwives. Under MCTA criteria for sufficient capacity, the population of females between the ages 15–44 is assessed against the full-time equivalency of maternity care health professionals within the area. When applying this criterion, a population-to-provider ratio of 1500:1 or less is used to

### WHAT IS A MCTA?

Maternity Care Target Areas (MCTAs) are areas within an existing Primary Care Health Professional Shortage Areas (HPSA) that are experiencing a shortage of maternity health care professionals.

<sup>1</sup> Centers for Disease Control – Contraception. Available at: <https://www.cdc.gov/reproductivehealth/contraception/index.htm>

<sup>2</sup> NASPA – Pharmacist Prescribing: Hormonal Contraceptives. 2022. Available at: <https://naspa.us/resource/contraceptives/>

<sup>3</sup> House Bill 1568, 2023. Available at: <https://iga.in.gov/legislative/2023/bills/house/1568>

<sup>4</sup> Data from Physicians Assistants and Advanced Practice Registered Nurses, who may be authorized to provide preventive women's health services, was not included.

<sup>5</sup> Health Resources & Service Administration – Scoring Shortage Designations. Available at: <https://bhwh.hrsa.gov/workforce-shortage-areas/shortage-designation/scoring>

determine maternity care practitioner capacity.<sup>6</sup> On the Indiana map, green county-level shading reflects counties with sufficient capacity, red shading indicates insufficient capacity and grey indicates that there are no maternity care practitioners in that county.

**Pharmacist practice location** data, collected from Indiana-licensed pharmacists during the 2020 license renewal cycle, was used to plot the distribution of actively practicing pharmacists across the state, in outpatient, community-based, and retail settings.

## FINDINGS

The combination of each of the three data sets generated the map below. The map demonstrates that over two thirds of Indiana's counties (67 of 92) are designated as primary care HPSAs, concluding that many communities throughout the state have insufficient availability of primary care physicians. Furthermore, only 14 of Indiana counties show sufficient maternity care provider capacity. When these datasets are reviewed together, only 7 counties are without a shortage of primary care or maternity care providers. These profession types are the infrastructure for women's preventive health care service delivery, including the provision of contraceptive care.<sup>7</sup>

Only 14 of Indiana's 92 counties meet the federal benchmark for sufficient capacity of maternity care providers.

## COUPLING DATA WITH POLICY RESEARCH

With widespread shortages of these health care professionals, access to preventive health services, including contraceptive care, may be limited. As states are seeking policy options to expand access to women's preventive health services, various strategies may be considered, including the expansion of pharmacists' scope of practice enabling them to prescribe certain contraceptives.<sup>8, 9</sup>

An examination of the distribution of the over 6,000 pharmacists active in Indiana demonstrates that many pharmacists serve in easily-accessible locations throughout the state, including within communities where there is insufficient primary care or maternity care capacity. In addition to pharmacists' availability within communities, the pharmacies they practice in generally offer extended hours and do not require appointments.<sup>10</sup>

In the 2023 legislative session, Indiana legislators considered expanding the scope of practice for pharmacists to prescribe and dispense hormonal contraceptives under certain conditions through House Enrolled Act 1568. Indiana health workforce data were reviewed as this policy was under consideration. Ultimately, the Indiana General Assembly passed the bill within both chambers and was signed into law by Governor Holcomb, demonstrating the power of state health workforce data to inform policy.

### 2023 INDIANA HOUSE ENROLLED ACT 1568

Allows pharmacists who meet certain requirements to prescribe and dispense hormonal contraceptive patches and self-administered hormonal contraceptives.

<sup>6</sup> Federal Register / Vol. 87, No. 97 / Thursday, May 19, 2022 / Notices. 2022. Available at: <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/FR-2022-05-19/pdf/2022-10783.pdf>

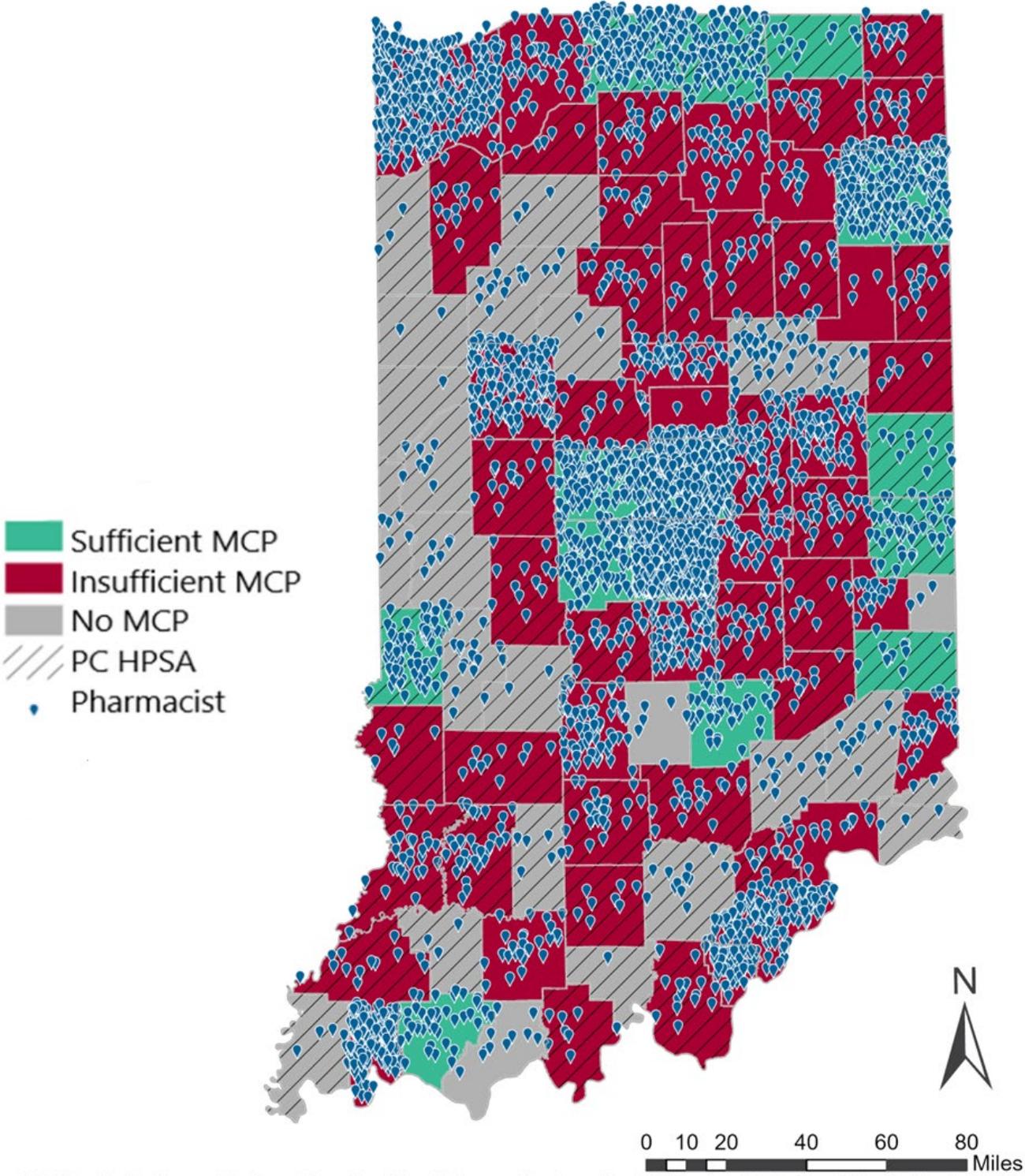
<sup>7</sup> Health Resources & Service Administration – Women's Preventive Services Guidelines. Available at: <https://www.hrsa.gov/womens-guidelines>

<sup>8</sup> Improving Access to Birth Control at the State Level. Available at: <https://www.americanprogress.org/series/improving-access-to-birth-control-at-the-state-level/>

<sup>9</sup> Advancing Contraception Access in States Through Expanded Pharmacist Prescribing. 2023. Available at: <https://www.americanprogress.org/article/advancing-contraception-access-in-states-through-expanded-pharmacist-prescribing/>

<sup>10</sup> Opposition to Pharmacist Contraception Services: Evidence for Rebuttal. 2020. Available at: <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/32977545/>

# Indiana Primary Care Health Professional Shortage Areas (PC HPSA), Maternity Care Practitioner (MCP) Capacity, and Pharmacist Distribution



Source: 2021 Indiana Physician License and Supplemental Survey Data; Indiana RN License and Supplemental Data 2021; full survey administered to all Indiana physicians that renewed online can be found at: <https://hdl.handle.net/1805/26208>. The Indiana RN survey can be found at: <https://scholarworks.iupui.edu/handle/1805/18431>. The Indiana Pharmacist survey can be found at <https://hdl.handle.net/1805/22412>. More information about Maternity Care Target Areas (MCTA) can be found at: <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/FR-2022-05-19/pdf/2022-10783.pdf> Note: The county level distribution of pharmacists primary and secondary practice setting was used to display practice location.