

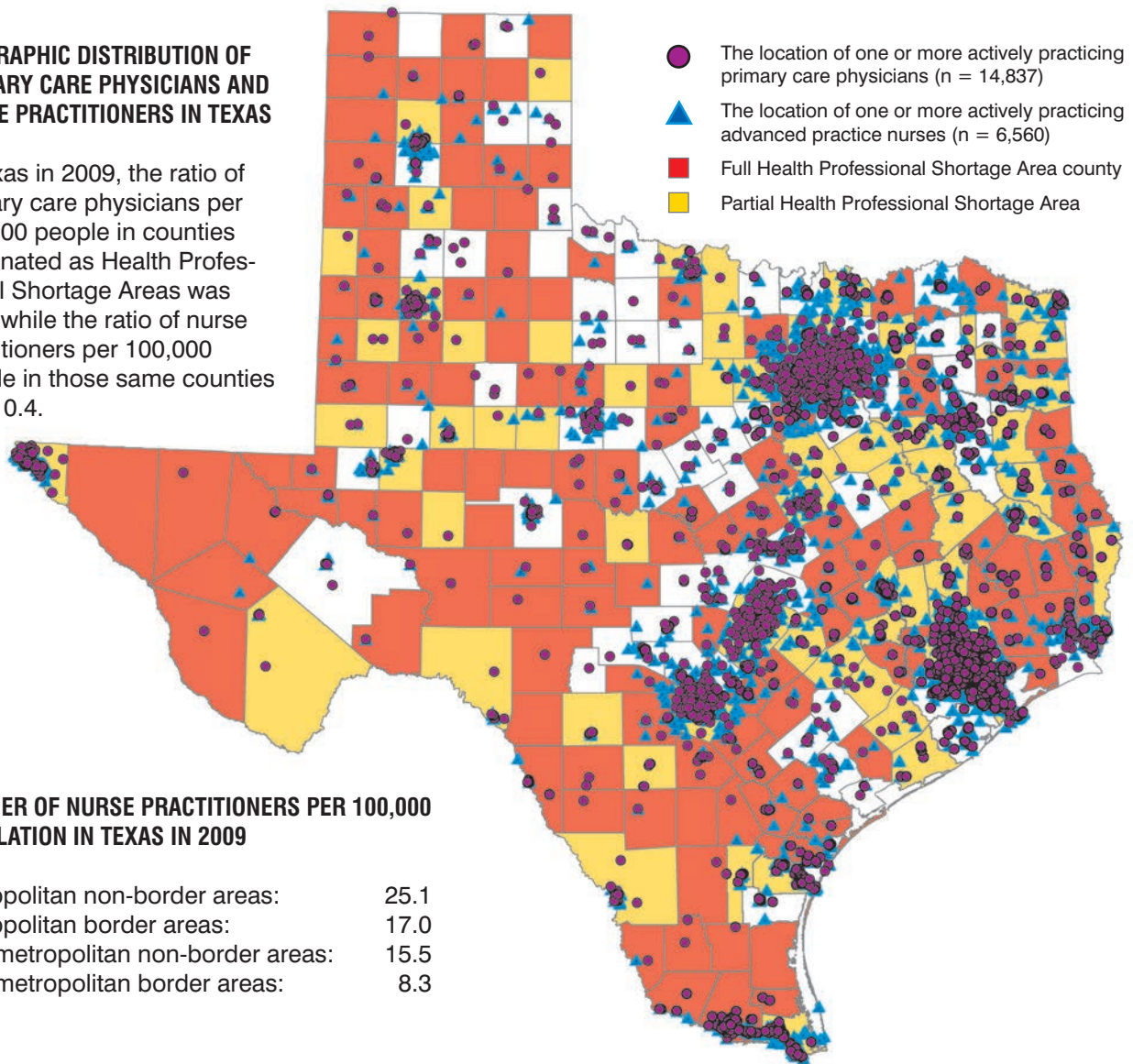
Primary Care Physicians Are the Most Likely Health Care Professionals to Practice in Rural and Underserved Areas

According to the Robert Graham Center, people in non-metropolitan areas, especially in rural areas, depend on family physicians more than any other specialty. Despite claims by nurse practitioners that they will practice in rural and underserved communities if granted the ability to diagnose and prescribe independently, the data suggest otherwise.

- Practice-mapping research conducted by the American Medical Association shows that patterns in practice locations for nurse practitioners in states with independent practice are no different from those in states that require collaboration between nurse practitioners and physicians.
- If granted independent practice, nurse practitioners would be practicing in the same economic environment as family physicians, and the factors that make opening and maintaining a rural medical practice will discourage nurse practitioners as well.

GEOGRAPHIC DISTRIBUTION OF PRIMARY CARE PHYSICIANS AND NURSE PRACTITIONERS IN TEXAS

In Texas in 2009, the ratio of primary care physicians per 100,000 people in counties designated as Health Professional Shortage Areas was 32.8, while the ratio of nurse practitioners per 100,000 people in those same counties was 10.4.



NUMBER OF NURSE PRACTITIONERS PER 100,000 POPULATION IN TEXAS IN 2009

| | |
|------------------------------------|------|
| Metropolitan non-border areas: | 25.1 |
| Metropolitan border areas: | 17.0 |
| Non-metropolitan non-border areas: | 15.5 |
| Non-metropolitan border areas: | 8.3 |

Nurse Practitioners Will Not Be More Likely to Serve Rural and Border Areas Than Primary Care Physicians if Granted Independent Practice

Sixteen states allow nurse practitioners to diagnose and prescribe without any physician collaboration. Four of those that feature metropolitan areas and large, rural areas like Texas are Idaho, Oregon, Arizona, and Utah. As is evident by the AMA practice distribution maps below, granting independent practice to nurse practitioners does not change their tendency to practice in metropolitan and suburban communities. According to a 2007 survey performed by Advance for Nurse Practitioners, of 6,162 respondents, 77% reported that they practiced in cities or suburbs, while only 23% practiced in a rural setting.

