

## **Primary Care Providers**

Primary care providers include M.D.s and D.O.s with the following specialties: general practice, family practice, pediatrics, internal medicine, obstetrics or obstetrics/gynecology, and general preventive medicine (public health). Mid-level providers—nurse practitioners, certified nurse midwives, and physician assistants—are also included. Primary care physicians in rural counties and mid-level providers in all counties were surveyed in 2003. The resultant data were tabulated for this report. Data on primary care physicians in the four metropolitan counties of Davidson, Hamilton, Knox, and Shelby were obtained from the Tennessee Department of Health licensure files for health professionals.

The full-time equivalency of each provider's practice was calculated based on the number of self-reported hours a provider is in direct patient care--that is, not performing hospital or nursing home rounds, administrative work, teaching, etc. A standard of a 40-hour work week in direct patient care is considered the equivalent of one full-time provider. Those reporting over 40 hours a week were counted as no greater than 1.0 full-time equivalent (FTE).

In 2003, there were reported 5,131 FTE primary care physicians estimated to be actively practicing direct patient primary care in the state. Of this total, 3,484, or 68 percent, were reportedly practicing in the four metropolitan counties of Davidson, Knox, Hamilton, and Shelby.

Data for mid-levels show that a total of 259 FTE primary care providers were actively practicing in the state. Over 70 percent (or 183) were located in the 91 non-metropolitan counties.