

Obstetric Providers

The full-time equivalency of obstetric providers is calculated from the provider's percentage of practice devoted to obstetrics multiplied by the number of hours the provider reported as spent in direct patient care. An obstetrician/gynecologist and an obstetrician (M.D. or D.O.) are counted as 100 percent obstetrical providers. Other providers, including mid-levels, were asked the actual percent of practice devoted to either prenatal services or prenatal and delivery. This reported percentage was used to calculate each full-time equivalent obstetric provider.

There were an estimated total of 535 full-time equivalent obstetric physicians actively practicing in Tennessee in 2003. Of these, 432, or eighty-one percent, were reportedly practicing in the four metropolitan counties of Davidson, Hamilton, Knox, and Shelby.

An additional 23 full-time equivalent mid-level providers offered obstetrical care. An estimated total of 41 percent of mid-level practitioners practiced in the four metropolitan counties. Fifteen of the state's 95 counties reported no OB provider. The primary reason a county may have no OB provider is the absence of a medical facility offering obstetric delivery services. This absence of an OB provider is commonly due to few numbers of births annually to the residents of a county and/or close proximity to services in a neighboring county.

The greatest number of OB providers, 161 of the 535 available statewide or 30 percent, practiced in Shelby County where 21 percent of the recorded births from 2000 to 2002 occurred.