

6. Follow up on Graduates Entering Primary Care Careers.....Warren Newton

Situation: North Carolina, like many states, is experiencing a downward trend in the number of new physicians who elect to enter primary care and family medicine practice. As a result some communities, especially those in rural areas of the state, experience challenges with access to primary care providers.

Background: In a report to this Committee in October 2014, Dr. Newton shared information indicating a downward trend in the number of graduates of schools of medicine, nursing, and other health professions in North Carolina who are entering careers in primary care and family medicine. This effect is particularly pronounced in rural areas of the state, where there is a dearth of physicians, nurse practitioners, physician assistants and other health care professionals who provide primary care services. This may have effects not only on citizens' access to health care and thus their health outcomes, but on economic growth and development in local regions that are experiencing shortages of primary health care providers.

Assessment: Dr. Newton will provide additional context about these trends, share how he is working with higher education as well as other interested groups to address the problem, and offer some ideas about issues that the Committee may wish to monitor or explore further.

Action: This item is for information only.