Analysis of Indiana’s Primary Care Physicians Providing Obstetric Services

Background
Reducing infant mortality is a top health policy priority in the State of Indiana. Information on the workforce delivering obstetric services in Indiana is critical to related initiatives. Obstetric services are a part of routine service line of physicians that specialize in obstetrics and gynecology (OB/GYN); however, physicians from other specialties, such as family medicine or general internal medicine, may also provide obstetric services. The purpose of this report is to quantify and describe the primary care physicians that report providing some level of obstetric care in Indiana.

Methods
Primary care physicians were identified through self-reported specialty in the 2017 Physician Re-Licensure survey. Specialty for these physicians, as well as survey non-respondents, were obtained and/or verified as part of the Primary Care Needs Assessment provider data management. In order to identify the primary care physicians providing obstetric services, a series of questions were administered to all primary care physicians. The questions posed to physician offices are provided below:

1. Do you provide pre-natal services?
2. Do you provide labor and delivery services?
3. Do you provide post-natal services?

The Health Resources Services Administration (HRSA) definitions and criteria for a community based primary care physicians was used to identify qualifying physicians. A diagram describing the report sample is found in Figure 1.
Figure 1. Report sample selection criteria

**Include**

- 27,000 physicians held active, valid to practice while under review or probationary license in Indiana
- 4,075 physicians reported actively practicing in medicine, had an Indiana license address and reported a specialty in primary care
- 4,012 verified as primary care providers
- 3,049 identified as practicing in a primary care practice setting
- 1,028 primary care providers responded to questions regarding obstetric services
- 873 primary care providers with a specialty in family medicine/general practice, general internist medicine or obstetrics and gynecology

**Exclude**

- 18,147 did not have an Indiana license address or did not report a primary care specialty
- 199 reported a sub-specialty that does not qualify for primary care specialties
- 963 identified as practicing in a non-primary care setting
- 2,021 did not respond to obstetric questions or were unable to have obstetric services status verified
- 155 primary care providers with a specialty in adolescent medicine, gynecology only and general pediatrics

1. The Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) defines primary care specialties as: Family Medicine/General Practice, Internal Medicine (General), Obstetrics and Gynecology and Pediatric (General).

2. As outlined by HRSA, sub-specialties of the primary care specialties that do not qualify for consideration in the primary care workforce are not included among primary care providers.

3. Practice settings which are not considered primary care settings as defined by HRSA include: Hospital – Ambulatory Care Center, Hospital – Emergency Department, Hospital – Inpatient, Research Laboratory, Medical School, Nursing Home or Extended Care Facility, Home Health Setting, Hospice Care, Local Health Department, Telemedicine, Volunteer in a Free Clinic, Veteran Affairs Hospital or Clinic, Urgent Care, Correctional Facilities, State Mental Health Hospitals and Other settings such as locum tenens and Corporate Care.

4. 1,616 primary care providers were unable to have their obstetric services verified by administrative/office staff.
Results

Table 1. Frequency of obstetric services by primary care physician specialty

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Primary Care Specialty</th>
<th>Pre-natal Services</th>
<th>Labor and Delivery Services</th>
<th>Post-natal services</th>
<th>Comprehensive obstetric services (pre-natal, L&amp;D, &amp; post-natal)</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Family Medicine/General Practice</td>
<td>Yes 147 No 276</td>
<td>Yes 131 No 292</td>
<td>Yes 178 No 245</td>
<td>Yes 131 No 292</td>
<td>423</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Internal Medicine</td>
<td>Yes 22 No 97</td>
<td>Yes 20 No 99</td>
<td>Yes 20 No 99</td>
<td>Yes 20 No 99</td>
<td>119</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Obstetrics/Gynecology</td>
<td>Yes 329 No 2</td>
<td>Yes 329 No 2</td>
<td>Yes 329 No 2</td>
<td>Yes 329 No 2</td>
<td>331</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>498</strong></td>
<td><strong>480</strong></td>
<td><strong>393</strong></td>
<td><strong>527</strong></td>
<td><strong>873</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Map 1: OB and Non-OB/GYN Primary Care Physicians Providing Pre-natal Services

Source: Indiana State Department of Health, Epidemiology Resource Center, Data Analysis Team, Vital Records Division
Infant mortality report: Indiana Primary Care Needs Assessment, Obstetric Care Data, 2008.

Notes: Rural county estimates determined by Office of Management and Budget (OMB) definition. Infant mortality rate is calculated as infant deaths per 1,000 live births. Data were suppressed for counties with small counts of infant deaths which are considered unreliable.
Map 2: OB and Non-OB/GYN Primary Care Physicians Providing Labor & Delivery Services

Indians Physicians that Report Providing Labor and Delivery Services by Primary Care Specialty

Infant Mortality Rate
2012-2016

Source: Indiana State Department of Health, Epidemiology Resource Center, Data Analysis Team, Vital Records Division
Births and Vital Event Report: Indiana Primary Care Needs Assessment, Obstetrics Care Data, 2018
Rural County classification determined by Office of Management and Budget. SMI definition, infant mortality rate is calculated as infant deaths per 1,000 live births. Data were suppressed for counties with small counts of infant deaths which are considered unstable.
Map 3: OB and Non-OB/GYN Primary Care Physicians Providing Post-natal Services

Source: Indiana State Department of Health, Epidemiology Resource Center, Data Analysis Team, Vital Records Division

Notes: Rural county boundaries determined by Office of Management and Budget (OMB) definition. Infant Mortality Rate is calculated as infant deaths per 1,000 live births. Data were suppressed for counties with small counts of infant deaths which are considered unstable.
Results

While OB/GYNs specialize in obstetric and maternal care, other physicians also provide some level of obstetric care. The majority of family medicine and internal medicine physicians do not report offering any level of obstetric care. This study found that 178 family medicine physicians, 22 general internal medicine physicians, and 329 OB/GYN physicians report offering some level of obstetric care. In total, 873 primary care physicians (131 family medicine, 20 internal medicine, and 329 OB/GYN) report offering comprehensive obstetric services (including pre-natal, labor & delivery, and post-natal care).

Discussion & Implications

The information provided in this report has important implications for measuring and evaluating access to obstetric services. Currently, there are no measures in the Indiana State Health Improvement Plan for the workforce providing these services. This likely reflects challenges associated with quantifying this workforce. The findings of this brief analysis suggest that specialty alone is not a reliable indicator. Fortunately, 2018 Senate Enrolled Act No. 223, signed by Governor Holcomb in 2018, authorizes the Indiana Professional Licensing Agency to collect information on specific services, including obstetric services, provided by physicians when they renew their medical license each biennium. SEA 223 will be implemented in January of 2019. Beginning with the 2019 medical license renewal, Indiana will have a more complete picture of the workforce providing obstetric services to Hoosiers.

Additionally, having physician specialty information is critical to the “Perinatal Levels of Care” facility designations outlined in the Guidelines for Perinatal Care (developed by the American Academy of Pediatrics and the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists). Perinatal Levels of Care Designations were authorized through 2018 Senate Enrolled Act No. 360 to be implemented by the Indiana State Department of Health. This analysis points to the need for a source of comprehensive specialty information on physicians in order to support state initiatives targeting key health issues.

5 http://iga.in.gov/legislative/2018/bills/senate/223
6 2018 Senate Enrolled Act No. 360. Available at: http://iga.in.gov/legislative/2018/bills/senate/360#document-c95f6f26