

Title: **New Frontiers in Health Workforce Research: Rethinking the Data Infrastructure Needed to Advance Workforce Policy and Planning**

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Purpose: To identify the data and research methods needed to promote more effective public and private decision making related to education, distribution and use of the health workforce to support access to quality care.

Background: The current health care reform discussions have raised awareness that having an adequate supply of well prepared health workers distributed in a manner that is consistent with population needs is an essential component of an effective health care system.

Key Findings:

- A lack of up-to-date, core data on a range of various health professions impedes analysis of the supply, demand, and distribution of the health care workforce across health professions and settings.
- Improved quality and comparability of data requires standardized collection methods and identifiers among the many public and private organizations that already collect data.
- There is no surveillance system that provides regular and frequent data (e.g., every 6-12 months) on shortages and surpluses by region that could provide early warnings of changes in the marketplace.
- There are important gaps in evidence around how payment systems affect workforce configurations, demand for providers, and the impact of workforce patterns on access, cost, and quality of care.

Figures: **Figure 1.** Factors to Consider When Assessing Health Workforce Supply
Figure 2. Factors to Consider When Assessing Health Workforce Demand

References: This is based on a non-published report.