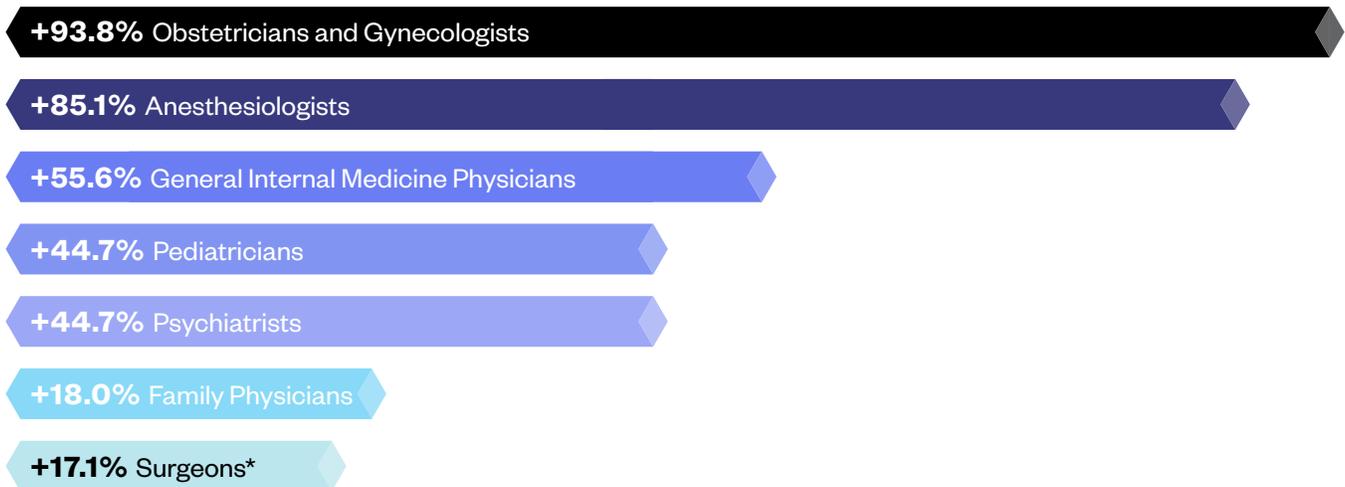


# The Growing Demand for Physicians in Colorado

Colorado has faced shortages of healthcare practitioners for years, and the coronavirus pandemic has only exacerbated those shortages. In 2015, even before the coronavirus pandemic, Colorado faced dire physician shortages, with some counties across the state registering zero physicians per 100,000 residents.<sup>1</sup> Projections remain dire; Colorado is expected to need an additional 1,773 primary care physicians by 2030,<sup>2</sup> significantly impacting the accessibility of healthcare, particularly in rural communities.

From 2017 to 2021, the number of online job postings for physicians in Colorado increased by 23.2 percent.<sup>3</sup> Demand for obstetricians and gynecologists grew the most, nearly doubling. Anesthesiologists and general internists are also in high demand.<sup>4</sup>

## ONLINE JOB POSTINGS FOR PHYSICIANS, 2017 – 2021<sup>5</sup>



As the Centennial State continues to fight coronavirus infections and work toward an equitable recovery, addressing these shortages will be critical. **For Colorado to remain competitive and address critical physician and healthcare worker shortages, it will be crucial to implement policies that not only attract and retain immigrant and refugee talent that is complementary to the U.S.-born workforce, but that also build career pathways for the immigrants who already call the state home.** One way to achieve this goal is to join states like Minnesota and Washington in reducing barriers for International Medical Graduates (IMGs) and internationally trained healthcare workers.

\* Excludes Ophthalmologists

The top three regions of birth for foreign-born physicians in Colorado were:<sup>6</sup>

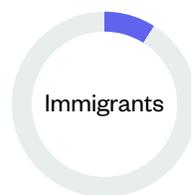
1. Europe
2. India/Southwest Asia
3. East Asia

Despite time-consuming and expensive barriers for internationally trained healthcare workers—they must repeat years of training and clinical hours to earn U.S. licensure—immigrant and refugee physicians punch above their weight.

**Addressing the barriers that prevent additional qualified, internationally trained physicians from practicing in Colorado will be vital to helping the state meet its growing healthcare needs.**



The share of immigrants and refugees in Colorado working as physicians **13.6%**<sup>7</sup>



Immigrant and refugee share of Colorado's population **9.3%**<sup>8</sup>



Of the share of immigrant and refugee physicians in Colorado, **8.1%** were likely IMGs.<sup>9\*\*</sup>

\*\* The share of foreign-born physicians who arrived in the U.S. after turning 25 years old was 8.1 percent.

## ENDNOTES

- 1 "Life Support: The Shortage of Physicians in America's Rural Counties and How Foreign-Born Doctors Can Help," New American Economy, September 2015, <http://research.newamericaneconomy.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/lifesupport929-1.pdf>.
- 2 Stephen M. Petterson, Angela Cai, Miranda Moore, Andrew Bazemore, "Colorado: Projecting Primary Care Physician Workforce, 2010-2030." Robert Graham Center, September 2013, <https://www.graham-center.org/content/dam/rgc/documents/maps-data-tools/state-collections/workforce-projections/Colorado.pdf>.
- 3 American Immigration Council analysis of Burning Glass Technologies Labor Insight™ 2022.
- 4 Ibid.
- 5 Ibid.
- 6 American Immigration Council analysis of the IPUMS microdata from the 2019 American Community Survey, 1-Year Sample.
- 7 Ibid.
- 8 "Map the Impact: Colorado," New American Economy, March 2, 2022, <https://www.newamericaneconomy.org/locations/colorado/>.
- 9 American Immigration Council analysis of the IPUMS microdata from the 2019 ACS, 1-Year Sample.