



WORKFORCE TALKING POINTS: PEDIATRICS AS AN ATTRACTIVE CAREER

1. No other physician group can match pediatricians on career satisfaction.

- ◆ 96 % of current graduating pediatric residents who are in the general practice job market report that if they did their residency over, that they would choose pediatrics again (2003 AAP Third-Year Resident Survey, unpublished data).
- ◆ Pediatricians reported higher satisfaction than internists on key satisfaction indicators including job, career, and specialty satisfaction. Additionally, generalist pediatricians were more satisfied than all other physicians surveyed regarding their relationships with patients and their personal time. They were also more likely to recommend their specialty to a student seeking advice. (Shugerman R, et. al. Pediatric generalists and subspecialists: determinants of career satisfaction. *Pediatrics*. 2001 Sep;108(3):e40; Leigh JP et al. Physician career satisfaction across specialties. *Arch Intern Med*. 2002 Jul 22;162:1577-1584.)

2. The opportunities for graduates of pediatric residencies are diverse and numerous.

- ◆ 80% of residents seeking a general practice position report obtaining their most desired position. (Cull WL et al. Pediatric training and job market trends: results from the American Academy of Pediatrics Third-Year Resident Survey, 1997-2002. *Pediatrics*. 2003 Oct;112(4):787-792).
- ◆ Training in general pediatrics is also the portal for careers in the pediatric subspecialties. As many pediatric subspecialties are currently experiencing workforce shortages or are anticipated to experience such shortages in the near future, a healthy supply of graduates of general pediatrics residency programs is essential to ensure an adequate pediatric subspecialty workforce.

3. Flexible jobs are more common in pediatrics than any other specialty.

- ◆ Pediatrics is at forefront of trend toward more flexible work arrangements for physicians. 26.1% of pediatricians versus 14.4% of all physicians report having worked part-time at some point in their career. Growth in part-time positions may not only provide fulfilling work arrangements for many, but they may also offset some supply concerns for the future (AAP News, 2002;21:126; Cull et al. Pediatricians working part-time: past, present, and future. *Pediatrics*. 2002 Jun;109(6):1015-20).



- ◆ Pediatrics is a specialty that offers a broad spectrum of rewarding career options. Pediatricians are free to choose one or more practice settings and styles; they may pursue a wide variety of interests. Generalist pediatricians are needed now and in the future to serve as educators, mentors, hospitalists and researchers. Rewarding careers are also available in public health, international health, health policy and administrative leadership.

4. Today and for the foreseeable future, there are many medically underserved communities seeking pediatricians.

- ◆ In the current supply level, which has been portrayed as at or near balance, there are still 48% of the 6,102 discrete primary care service areas (PCSAs) (local health care markets) in the US that do not have a pediatrician. A small but important number of children, 290,000, live in 313 PCSAs without either a pediatrician or a family physician. (AAP Technical Report, *The Pediatrician Workforce: Current Status and Future Prospects*).
- ◆ National health care workforce projections, though useful for analysis and policy at a macro level, cannot take into account regional or local workforce needs. For this reason, it is important that regional and local health care needs be assessed through additional studies that can address the "nuts-and-bolts" issues.

5. Because numerous, often unpredictable factors influence the adequacy of the workforce, workforce projections should not be the sole information used to choose one's career.

- ◆ Demand for services from pediatricians may increase due to factors such as: increased insurance coverage for children; a growing shift in the number of physician office visits for children from family physicians to pediatricians (AAP Department of Practice and Research and the AAP Center for Child Health Research. Pediatricians providing larger share of care to infants, teens. *AAP News*. 2003 Dec;23(6):274; Freed et al. Which physicians are providing health care to America's children. *Arch Pediatr Adolesc Med* 2004 Jan;158:22-26); changes in the type of and demand for pediatric services deriving from advances in genetics; and/or decreases in the supply of other pediatric subspecialties that could impact on the breadth of care provided by pediatric generalists.
- ◆ It is difficult to predict accurately either a future undersupply or oversupply of pediatricians. Workforce projection models are an important tool in this endeavor. However, they are but one piece of information that should be used in career planning.