

**COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS  
HEALTH POLICY COMMISSION**

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**TECHNICAL APPENDIX B5  
PRIMARY CARE ACCESS**

**ADDENDUM TO 2015 COST TRENDS REPORT**

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## 1 Definitions

The National Center for Health Workforce Analysis contracts with the Dartmouth Institute for Health Policy and Clinical Practice's Dartmouth Atlas Project to define Primary Care Services Areas (PCSAs). PCSAs are a tool for measurement of primary care resources, utilization and associated outcomes. PCSAs are created by aggregating census tracts to reflect Medicare patient travel to primary care providers. The most recent PCSA definitions are based on aggregating 2010 census tracts and use 2010 Medicare utilization data, 2010 American Medical Association (AMA) physician location data, 2009 American Association of Physician Assistants (AAPA) data on Physician Assistant locations, and 2012 data on community health centers (CHCs), Federally qualified health centers (FQHC), and rural health clinic (RHC) locations.

## 2 Data

For the analysis of the primary care providers per PCSA, we used data from two sources: SK&A and the Massachusetts Department of Public Health, Health Care Workforce Center. We used the SK&A September 2015 Office-Based Physician database to calculate the number of nurse practitioners (NPs) in the Commonwealth. We included only NPs who list their specialty as one of the following: family medicine, pediatrics, internal medicine and pediatrics, general practice, adolescent medicine, geriatrics, or gynecology. NPs who did not list a specialty were considered as primary care providers. NPs that practiced in multiple PCSAs were weighted, e.g. if a NP worked in two PCSAs they were counted as 0.5 in each PCSAs.

The Massachusetts Department of Public Health, Health Care Workforce Center data was used to calculate the number of physicians and physician assistants (PAs) per PCSA. Primary care physicians were counted if their self-designated primary specialty was one of the following: adolescent medicine, family medicine, general practice, geriatric medicine, internal medicine, internal medicine/pediatrics, or pediatrics.