

May 2017 | Data Note

Data Note: A Large Majority of Physicians Participate in Medicaid

Julia Paradise

About [70% of all office-based physicians accept new Medicaid patients](#), including [two-thirds of primary care physicians and close to three-quarters \(72%\) of specialists](#). The percentage of physicians accepting new Medicaid patients varies by state, ranging from 39% in New Jersey to 97% in Nebraska (Figure 1). Overall, about 85% of physicians accept new privately insured patients, but this rate also varies by state, ranging from 57% in the District of Columbia to 95% in Illinois. In one-quarter of states (14), more than 85% of physicians accept new Medicaid patients, including 10 states where at least 90% do. Physician participation in Medicaid is generally highest in the most [rural states](#). In the 11 states where at least half the population lives in rural areas, the median Medicaid physician participation rate is 90%, compared to 71% in the 25 states where less than one-quarter of the population is rural. In many states, the responsibility for ensuring adequate physician participation in Medicaid rests largely with [managed care plans](#), which serve a growing majority of Medicaid beneficiaries. There is no evidence that physician participation in Medicaid is declining. In a 2015 survey, 4 in 10 primary care physicians who accepted Medicaid reported seeing an [increased number of Medicaid patients](#) since January 2014, when the coverage expansions in the Affordable Care Act took full effect.

