

SKIN CARE PROVIDER SHORTAGES



Nearly 84.5 million Americans are impacted by a skin condition. But the United States has only about 12,000 dermatologists.

Making matters worse, these specialists are concentrated in urban areas, leaving rural communities underserved. With too few dermatologists, skin patients face a greater risk of developing skin conditions – or having existing skin conditions worsen.

IMPACT ON PATIENTS & PRIMARY CARE PROVIDERS

Due to the shortage of dermatologists, two-thirds of patients with skin conditions first share their symptoms with primary care providers. These clinicians, however, receive only about 10 hours of dermatology instruction during medical school. That can limit their ability to diagnose and treat skin issues, especially less common ones.

As a result, patients often require specialist referrals, contributing to a backlog in dermatology appointments.

POTENTIAL SOLUTIONS

Connecting patients with optimal dermatological care despite specialist shortages requires:



Access to Telemedicine. Remote consultations can help patients in rural areas, ensuring quicker access to dermatologists and reducing the need for travel.



Access to Nurse Practitioners and Physician Associates. Empowering advanced care practitioners with specialized dermatology training can facilitate timely diagnoses and care for patients.



Public Awareness. Educating patients about preventive measures and early signs of skin conditions can empower them to take control of their skin health, ultimately helping to manage the demand for dermatological care.

With a multi-faceted approach, policymakers and health care providers can ensure that patients with skin conditions still receive the care they need.