

Texas Distribution of Nurse Practitioners by Specialty

2023 Update

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Background

The 2022 to 2036 healthcare workforce supply and demand projections, published by the Texas Health Professions Resource Center, projected a statewide oversupply of more than 10,000 full-time equivalent (FTE) Nurse Practitioners (NP) in Texas in 2023.¹

However, the distribution of the NP workforce in Texas, the second most populated state in the country, is uneven.² In 2023, the distribution of NPs and NP specialists per capita varied across the state. Noncore counties in Texas had a projected 27% unmet demand for NPs, while metropolitan counties had an oversupply of NPs. This unmet demand is projected to improve, and supply is projected to meet the demand by 2028. In 2022, Texas ranked 47th in the country in nurse-to-population ratio.³ This study provides an update on the total number of NPs, their primary specialties, education, and geographic distribution.

Methods

This study uses annual licensure data from the Texas Board of Nursing (BON). The data, received in September 2023, was geocoded and analyzed.

NPs were considered active and working in Texas if they met the following criteria:

- They had a current Texas license,
- They were actively employed in nursing (full-time, part-time, or per-diem), and
- They had a practice address, or mailing address when practice was not available, in Texas.

The file was then de-duplicated and frequencies were computed by specialty, and location. The definitions for metropolitan, border, and urban-rural were obtained from the U.S. Census Bureau⁴, the La Paz Agreement⁵, and the National Center for Health Statistics⁶, respectively.

Conclusion

Even though the number of NPs is projected to increase over the next decade in Texas, the distribution of NPs across the state is not even. While, in 2023, the majority of NPs were practicing in metropolitan non-border counties, only 0.5% were located in non-metropolitan border counties. This maldistribution puts a strain on the areas that rely on NPs to provide services.

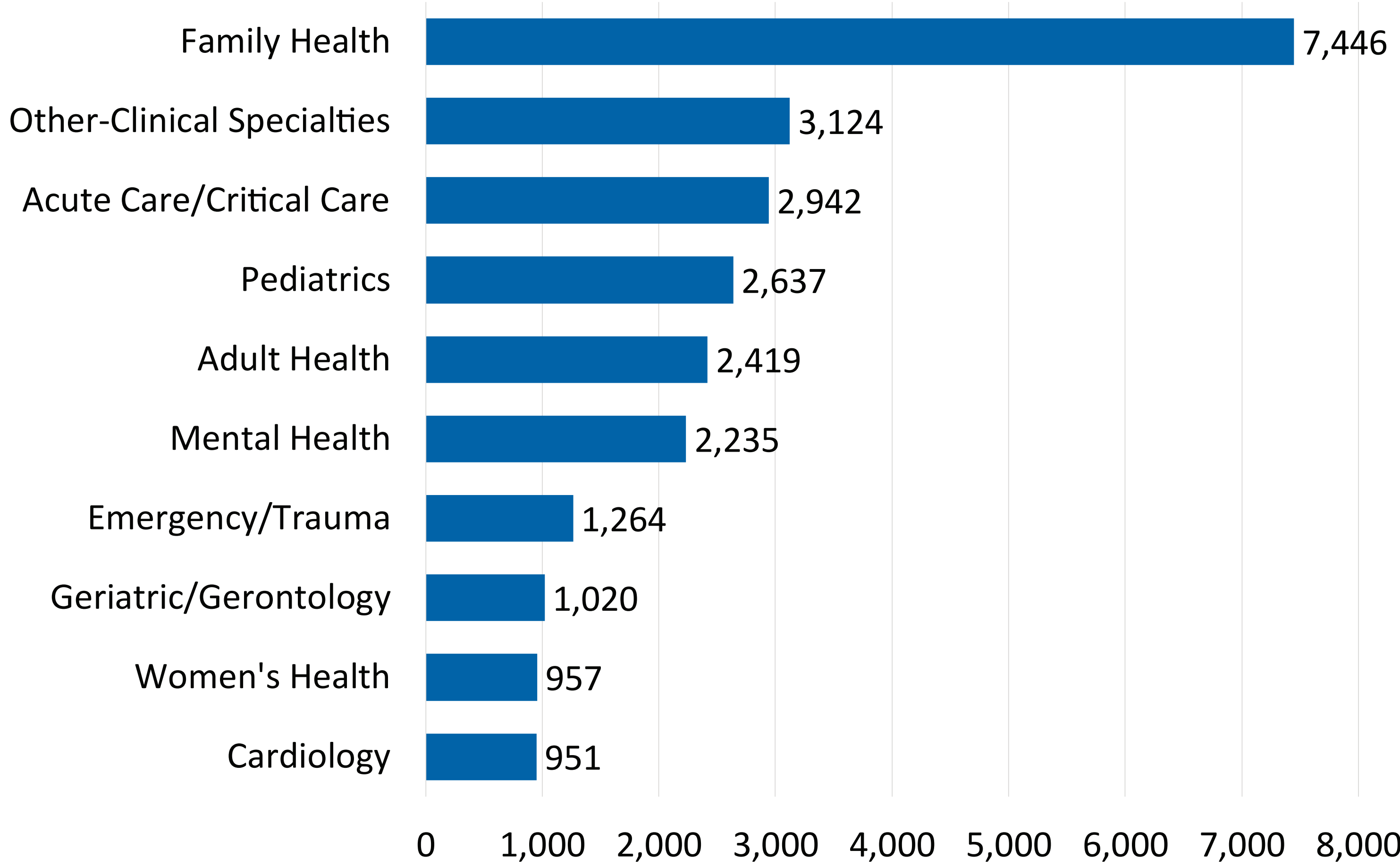
Also, while almost 25% of NPs had a specialty in family health, less than 10% specialized in pediatrics and only 3% in geriatrics or gerontology.

Similar to the overall NP population, NPs with a pediatrics or geriatrics specialty were mostly distributed in large metropolitan counties.

Further research should be done on the recruitment, retention, and distribution needs of NP specialties in different geographic regions of Texas and the country.

Results

Figure 1. Top 10 Nurse Practitioner Specialties in Texas, 2023



Highlights

- In 2023, there were 30,498 actively licensed NPs in Texas.
- About one in four had a primary specialty in family health.
- Over 85% of NPs practiced in metro non-border counties.
- Only 0.5% of NPs practiced in non-metro border counties.
- More than half of all geriatric specialty NPs were in large central metropolitan counties, while less than 40% of adults over 65 years old lived in those areas.
- Over 60% of pediatric specialty NPs were in large central metropolitan counties, but only 45% of the pediatric population resided in those counties.
- About 14% of the population over 65 years old lived in micropolitan and noncore counties, but only 5.3% of NPs with a geriatric specialty worked in those counties.

Figure 2. Distribution of Nurse Practitioners, 2023

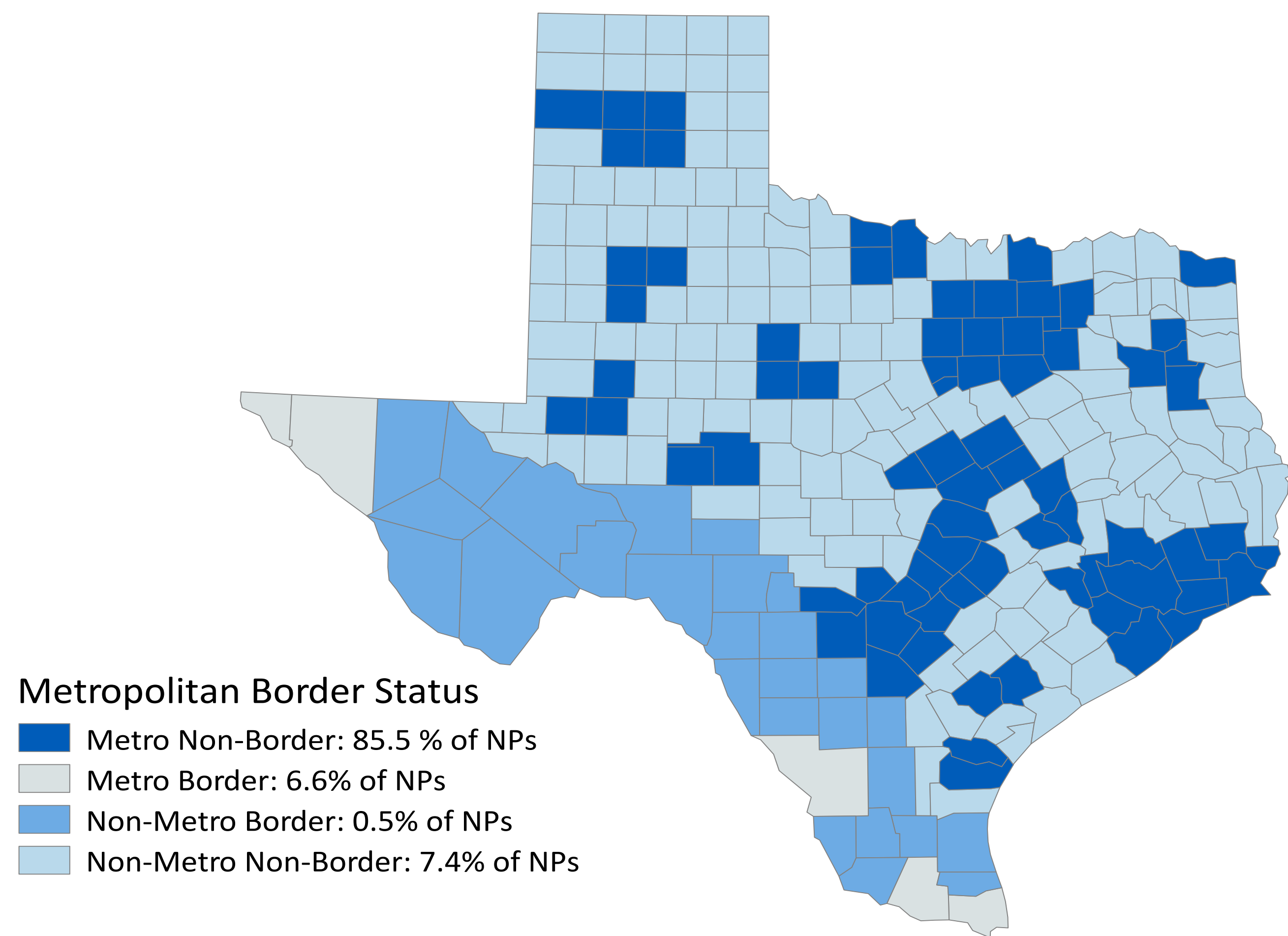
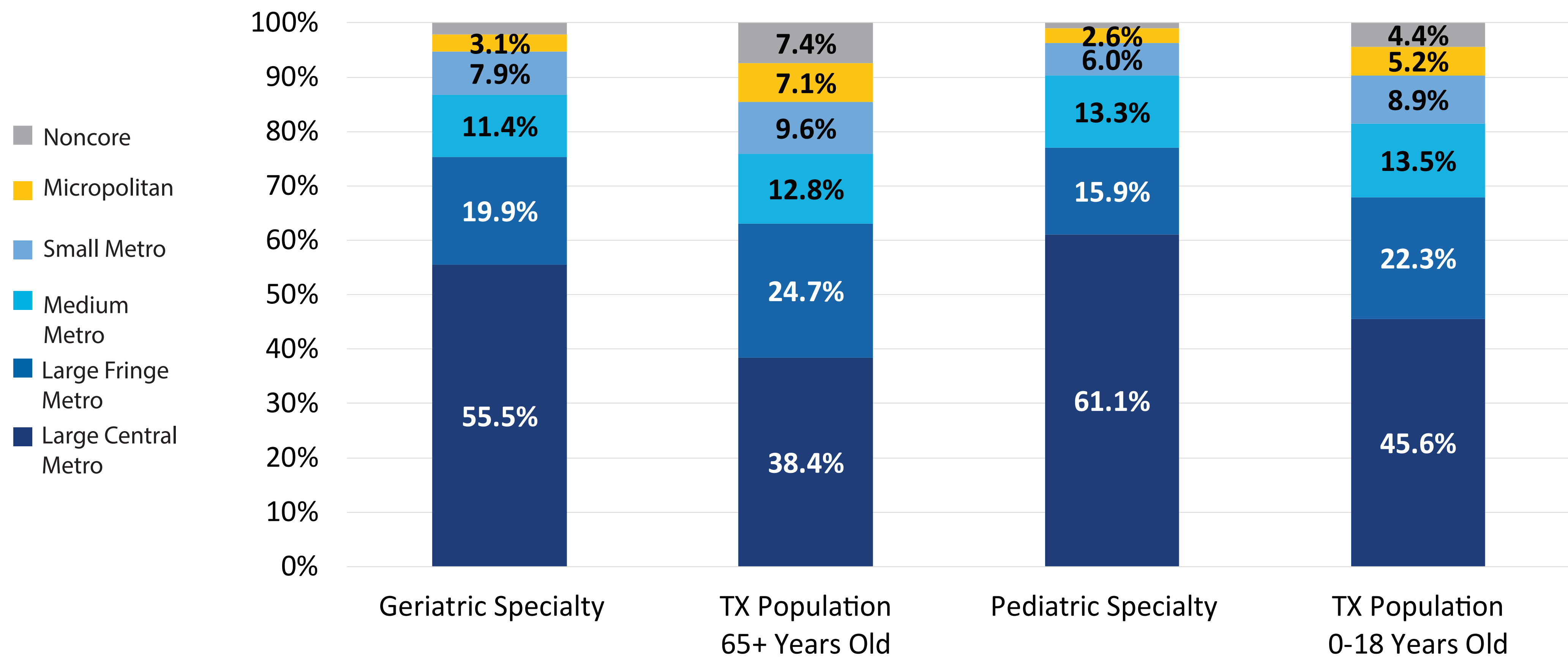


Figure 3. Urban-Rural Distribution of Pediatric and Geriatric Nurse Practitioners Compared to the Pediatric and Geriatric Texas Population, 2023



References

¹Texas Health Data- Workforce Supply & Demand Projections. <https://healthdata.dshs.texas.gov/dashboard/health-care-workforce/hprc/workforce-supply-and-demand>

²Bureau UC. State Population Totals and Components of Change: 2020-2023. Census.gov. <https://www.census.gov/data/tables/time-series/demo/popest/2020s-state-total.html>

³Accounts TC of P. Nursing in Texas. <https://comptroller.texas.gov/economy/fiscal-notes/archive/2022/apr/nursing.php>

⁴Bureau UC. About. Census.gov. <https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/metro-micro/about.html>

⁵The Texas Portion of the U.S. – México Border | Texas DSHS. <https://www.dshs.texas.gov/regional-local-health-operations/texas-border-health/tx-mx-border>

⁶Data Access- Urban Rural Classification Scheme for Counties. Published April 6, 2023. <https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data-analysis-tools/urban-rural.html>

