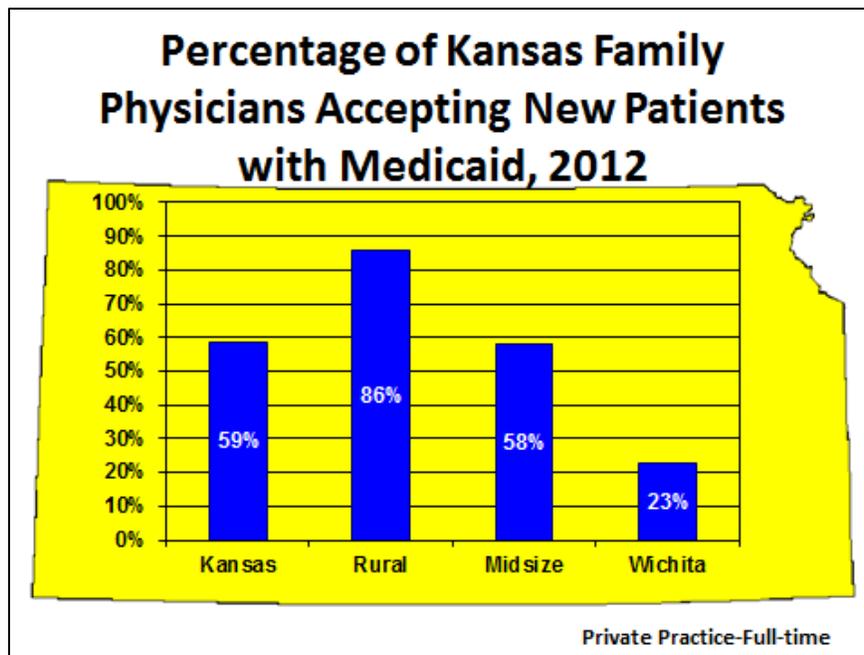


## Percentage of Kansas Family Physicians Accepting New Patients with Medicaid

Medicaid payment rates in Kansas for most services provided by physicians are a fraction of the rate paid by private insurers and by Medicare. In 2011, 31% of office-based physicians from the 2011 National Ambulatory Medical Care Survey Electronic Medical Records Supplement said they were unwilling to accept any new Medicaid patients.<sup>1</sup> This same study showed that 57% of Kansas physicians were accepting new Medicaid patients.

In 2012, a survey of practicing family physicians in Kansas indicated community variations in the percentage who were taking new Medicaid patients into their practices. Only 23% of physicians in full-time private practice in Wichita are accepting new patients with Medicaid. Higher percentages of Wichita physicians who work in community health centers and teach in residency programs, accept new patients with Medicaid. Patients in Wichita with Medicaid may access medical services through the emergency departments of local hospitals. Physicians in rural and midsized Kansas communities generally continue to accept new patients with Medicaid, perhaps out of a feeling of responsibility to their community.



There are a number of reasons a physician practice may not accept new Medicaid patients. The practice may have an existing oversupply of patients, although a 2011 study<sup>2</sup> found that physicians who had a high or moderate share of Medicaid patients were more likely to accept new patients with Medicaid. This same study found that low reimbursement rates as well as difficulty arranging specialist care and administrative hassles may result in a physician restricting his practice to patients with "good insurance." A physician may also restrict their practice based on focus (e.g. occupational medicine, cosmetic medicine) or payment (e.g. concierge or boutique practice). Whatever the reason, access to care may suffer and health care costs may increase when family physicians do not accept new patients with Medicaid.

1. Decker SL. In 2011 nearly one-third of physicians said they would not accept new Medicaid patients, but rising fees may help. *Health Aff (Millwood)*. 2012 Aug;31(8):1673-9.
2. Sommers AS, Paradise J, Miller C. Physician willingness and resources to serve more medicaid patients: perspectives from primary care physicians. *Medicare Medicaid Res Rev*. 2011 May 9;1(2).