

# **An Analysis of the Demand for Primary Care Physicians and Specialty Physicians for St. James Parish, Louisiana**



**The Rural Hospital Performance Improvement Project  
Mississippi Delta Project**

April 2010

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Prepared for:

St. James Parish Hospital, St. James Parish, Louisiana

through

The Rural Hospital Performance Improvement Project  
Mississippi Delta Project

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## **Introduction**

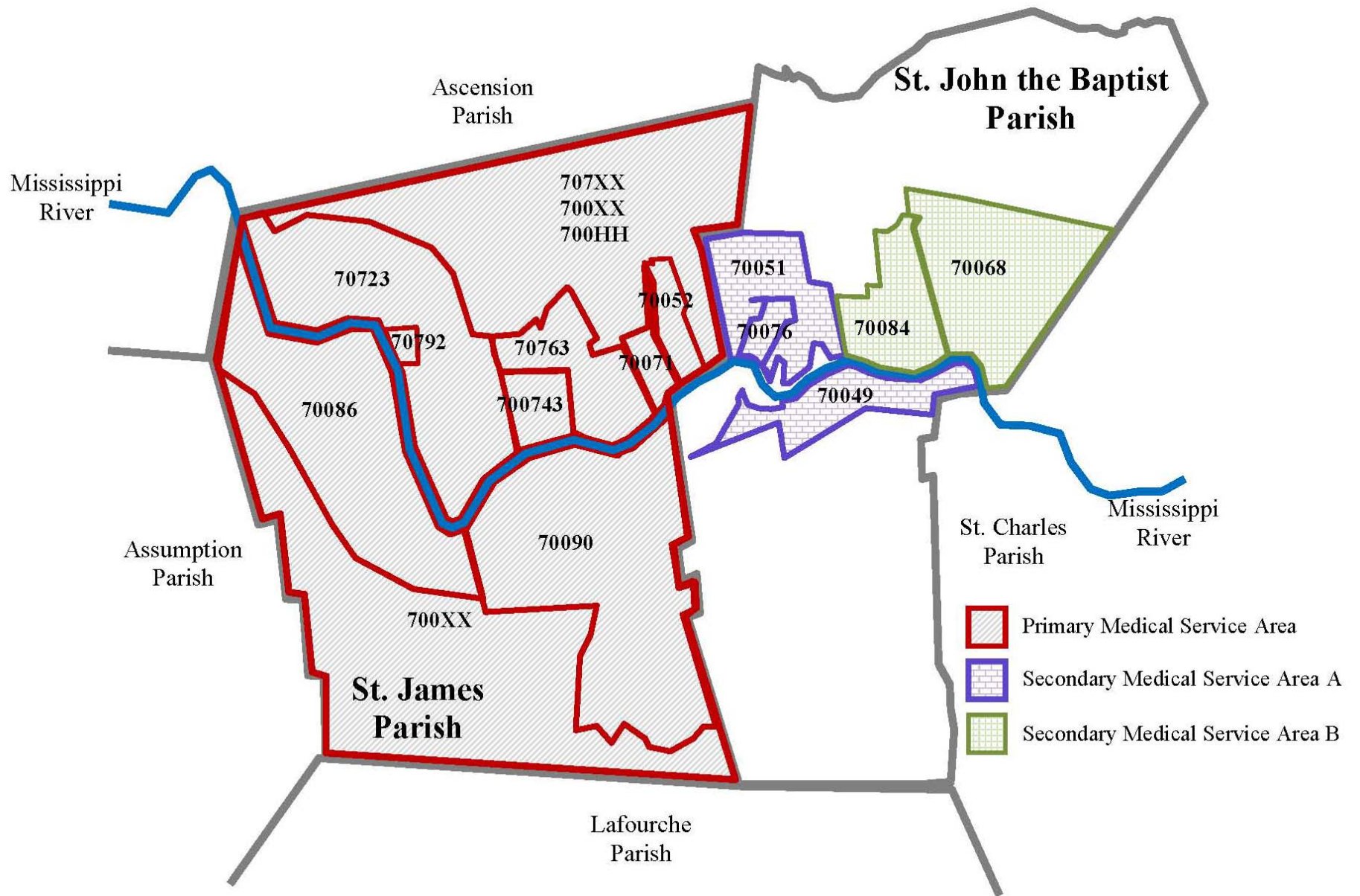
This report will examine the need for primary care physicians and specialty physicians for St. James Parish. Primary care physicians include family practice or general medicine physicians, internal medicine physicians, OB/GYN, and pediatricians. Specialty physicians included in this study are allergists, cardiologists, gastroenterologists, oncologists, nephrologists, neurologists, pulmonologists, rheumatologists, and surgeons performing general surgeries, and surgeons performing specialty surgeries in the areas of ENT, ophthalmology, orthopedics, and urology. Specifically, the study will:

1. Illustrate the populations of the primary medical service area and secondary medical service areas A and B;
2. Estimate total office visits and primary care physician office visits in the primary medical service area and secondary medical service areas A and B;
3. Estimate the total demand for primary care physicians in the primary medical service area and secondary medical service areas A and B; and
4. Estimate the need for selected specialty physicians.

No recommendations will be made. The information included in this report is designed to assist local decision-makers in assessing the need and potential for primary care physician services and specialty physician services.

### **Physician Medical Service Area for St. James Parish**

**Figure 1** represents the primary medical service area and secondary medical service areas A and B. The primary medical service area includes zip codes 70052 Gramercy, 70071 Litcher, 70086 St. James, 70090 Vacherie, 70723 Convent, 70743 Hester, 70763 Paulina, and 70792



**Figure 1.** Physician Utilization - Primary and Secondary Medical Service Areas A and B for St. James Parish Hospital

Uncle Sam. Secondary medical service area A includes zip codes 70049 Edgard, 70051 Garyville and 70076 Mount Airy, and secondary medical service area B includes zip codes 70068 LaPlace and 70084 Reserve.

For the purposes of this study, the assumption is that approximately 95 percent of the primary medical service area, 25 percent of secondary medical service area A, and five percent of secondary medical service area B populations utilize primary care physician services from St. James Parish. **Table 1** presents the medical service area populations. Zip code area population is available on a limited basis from the U. S. Census Bureau; the last reported zip code area populations from the Census were for the year 2000. Therefore, another source will be used, Community Sourcebook of Zip Code Demographics, 23rd Edition, 2009, from ESRI. The ESRI data are population projections for the year 2009. According to the ESRI data, the projected population of the primary medical service area was 23,268, secondary medical service area A was 6,278, and secondary medical service area B was 43,574.

**Table 2** presents age groups with their corresponding estimated number of annual physician office visits by gender. For instance, for males under age 15, the average number of annual physician office visits is 2.6 visits per year. These data were from the National Ambulatory Health Care Survey: 2006 Summary from the U. S. Department of Health and Human Services, released in August 2008 [1,2,3].

**Table 3**, utilizing the annual primary care physician office visits by age group, presents the number of annual physician office visits generated in the primary and secondary medical service areas A and B. These were estimated by multiplying the 2009 estimated population by age and gender groups for the medical service areas by the estimated number of annual physician

**Table 1**  
**Populations for Primary, Secondary Medical Service Area A**  
**and Secondary Medical Service Area B of St. James Parish Hospital**

Zip Code	Zip Code Area	2009 ESRI Population
<b><i>Primary Medical Service Area</i></b>		
70052	Gramercy	3,340
70071	Lutcher	3,984
70086	St. James	2,379
70090	Vacherie	7,686
70723	Convent	2,012
70743	Hester	257
70763	Paulina	3,463
70792	Uncle Sam	147
<b>Total</b>		<b><u>23,268</u></b>
<b><i>Secondary Medical Service Area A</i></b>		
70049	Edgard	3,304
70051	Garyville	2,243
70076	Mount Airy	731
<b>Total</b>		<b><u>6,278</u></b>
<b><i>Secondary Medical Service Area B</i></b>		
70068	LaPlace	35,521
70084	Reserve	8,053
<b>Total</b>		<b><u>43,574</u></b>

SOURCE: Community Sourcebook of Zip Code Demographics, 23rd Edition, 2009, ESRI populations.

**Table 2**  
**Annual Primary Care Physician Office Visits by Age Group**

Age Group	Male Visit Rate <sup>1</sup>	Female Visit Rate <sup>1</sup>
< 15	2.6	2.6
15-24	1.1	2.4
25-44	1.6	3.0
45-64	3.0	3.9
65-74	5.5	6.0
75+	7.1	7.3

<sup>1</sup> Source: Annual visit rates by gender and age groups, U. S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center of Health Statistics, "National Ambulatory Medical Care Survey: 2006 Summary," No. 3, August 2008.

**Table 3**  
**Annual Primary Care Physician Office Visits Generated in Primary and Secondary**  
**Medical Service Areas**

Age	Male			Female			Total Visits
	2009 Population <sup>1</sup>	Visit Rate <sup>2</sup>	Visits	2009 Population <sup>1</sup>	Visit Rate <sup>2</sup>	Visits	
<b>Primary Medical Service Area</b>							
< 15	2,448	2.6	6,366	2,392	2.6	6,219	12,585
15-24	1,690	1.1	1,859	1,799	2.4	4,318	6,177
25-44	2,916	1.6	4,666	2,914	3.0	8,742	13,408
45-64	2,987	3.0	8,960	3,180	3.9	12,403	21,363
65-74	701	5.5	3,855	919	6.0	5,516	9,371
75+	<u>526</u>	7.1	<u>3,735</u>	<u>795</u>	7.3	<u>5,802</u>	<u>9,537</u>
<b>Subtotal</b>	11,268		29,441	12,000		37,198	<b>72,441</b>
<i>Local Primary Care Office Visits Per Year (58.4 percent of total)</i>							<b>42,306</b>
<b>Secondary Medical Service Area A</b>							
< 15	637	2.6	1,655	667	2.6	1,735	3,390
15-24	439	1.1	483	502	2.4	1,205	1,688
25-44	758	1.6	1,213	813	3.0	2,439	3,652
45-64	777	3.0	2,330	887	3.9	3,461	5,791
65-74	182	5.5	1,002	256	6.0	1,539	2,541
75+	<u>137</u>	7.1	<u>971</u>	<u>222</u>	7.3	<u>1,619</u>	<u>2,590</u>
<b>Subtotal</b>	2,930		7,654	3,348		11,998	<b>19,652</b>
<i>Local Primary Care Office Visits Per Year (58.4 percent of total)</i>							<b>11,477</b>
<b>Secondary Medical Service Area B</b>							
< 15	4,619	2.6	12,009	4,448	2.6	11,565	23,574
15-24	3,189	1.1	3,508	3,346	2.4	8,030	11,538
25-44	5,502	1.6	8,803	5,419	3.0	16,257	25,060
45-64	5,635	3.0	16,905	5,914	3.9	23,065	39,970
65-74	1,322	5.5	7,271	1,709	6.0	10,254	17,525
75+	<u>992</u>	7.1	<u>7,043</u>	<u>1,478</u>	7.3	<u>10,789</u>	<u>17,832</u>
<b>Subtotal</b>	21,259		55,539	22,314		79,960	<b>135,499</b>
<i>Local Primary Care Office Visits Per Year (58.4 percent of total)</i>							<b>79,131</b>

<sup>1</sup> Source: Community Sourcebook of Zip Code Demographics, 23rd Edition, 2009, ESRI populations.

<sup>2</sup> Source: Annual visit rates by gender and age groups, U. S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center of Health Statistics, "National Ambulatory Medical Care Survey: 2006 Summary," No. 3, August 2008.

office visits. Of these total office visits, recent data indicate that 58.4 percent of total physician office visits will be made to physicians active in primary patient care while the remainder will be made to specialists [3]. Using the office visit data presented in **Table 3**, the primary medical service area will generate 72,441 total annual physician office visits. Local primary care physician office visits were then calculated, based on the 58.4 percent, resulting in a total of 42,306 primary care physician office visits in primary medical service area. Secondary medical service area A will generate 19,652 total annual physician office visits with 11,477 of this total being primary care physician office visits, and secondary medical service area B will generate 135,499 total annual physician office visits with 79,131 of the total being primary care physician office visits.

The total number of primary care office visits given various usage rates is presented in **Table 4** for the primary medical service area and secondary medical service areas A and B. If the residents in the primary medical service area exercise a 95 percent usage rate of primary care physicians, the secondary medical service area A usage rate is 25 percent, and the secondary medical service area B usage rate is five percent, the estimated annual primary care office visits would be 49,835. The national average for the number of annual office visits to each primary care physician is 5,000 [3]. ***Based on the assumption that utilization will be 95 percent for the primary medical service area, 25 percent for secondary medical service area A, and five percent for secondary medical service area B, St. James Parish will need an estimated 10.0 full-time equivalent (FTE) primary care physicians.***

**Table 5** shows that St. James Parish currently has six full-time primary care physicians and five part-time primary care physicians, totaling 8.5 FTEs. To estimate primary care

**Table 4**  
**Primary Care Physician Office Visits Given Usage**  
**By Local Residents in the Primary and Secondary Medical Service Areas A and B**

<b>Usage by Residents of Primary Medical Service Area</b>							
	70%	75%	80%	85%	90%	95%	100%
	29,614	31,730	33,845	35,960	38,075	<b>40,191</b>	42,306
<b>Usage by Residents of Secondary Medical Service Area A</b>							
	5%	10%	15%	20%	25%	30%	35%
	574	1,148	1,722	2,295	<b>2,869</b>	3,443	4,017
<b>Usage by Residents of Secondary Medical Service Area B</b>							
	5%	10%	15%	20%	25%	30%	35%
	<b>6,775</b>	13,550	20,325	27,100	33,875	40,650	47,425

If 95% primary medical service area, 25% secondary medical service area A, and 5% secondary medical service area B,  
then the usage would be:  
49,835 total primary care physician office visits  
for an estimated **10.0 Total Primary Care Physicians**  
Based on 5,000 average annual primary care office visits per physician practice

**Table 5**  
**List of Primary Care Physicians in St. James Parish, Louisiana**

Physician Name	Type of Practice	Location of Practice	Frequency	FTEs
Dr. Carl Poche	Family Practice	Lutcher, LA	3 Days per Week	0.60
Dr. Jerry Poche	Family Practice	Lutcher, LA	4 Days per Week	0.80
Dr. Randall Poche	Family Practice	Lutcher, LA	4 Days per Week	0.80
Dr. Anu Vellanki	Internal Medicine	Gramercy, LA	5 Days per Week	1.00
Dr. Aparna Vellanki	Internal Medicine	Gramercy, LA	5 Days per Week	1.00
Dr. Jacob Oommen	OB/GYN	Lutcher, LA	1/2 Days per Week	0.10
Dr. Leya Mathew	Pediatrics	Gramercy, LA	2 1/2 Days per Week	0.20
Dr. Cullen Omond	Family Practice	Vacherie, LA	5 Days per Week	1.00
Dr. Dirk Ory	Family Practice	Vacherie, LA	5 Days per Week	1.00
Dr. Raja Talluri	Family Practice	Vacherie, LA	5 Days per Week	1.00
Dr. Roland Waguespack	Family Practice	Vacherie, LA	5 Days per Week	1.00
<b>Total FTEs</b>				<b><u>8.50</u></b>

SOURCE: St. James Parish Hospital, Physician Roster, April 2010.

physicians needed in St. James Parish, users of the data will have to choose the most appropriate usage rates based on local knowledge and local insights.

Higher usage levels would indicate that more physicians could be supported, while lower usage levels would indicate fewer physicians could be supported. All assumptions and local conditions, including the actual usage levels in St. James Parish, must be taken into consideration by local decision-makers before determining if additional primary care physicians could successfully locate in St. James Parish. Again, primary care physicians include family practice and general medicine physicians, internal medicine physicians, OB/GYN, and pediatricians. Mid-level professionals could be employed to replace one-half FTE primary care physician per mid-level. All types of primary care practitioners should be considered when analyzing the primary care physician needs in St. James Parish.

### **Estimating Need for Specialty Physicians**

To estimate the need for specialty physicians, a different methodology was utilized. From the literature, averages of baseline populations were determined that represented the level of population necessary to support a specialty physician in each respective specialty [4,5]. Based on these average population-to-specialty physician ratios, an estimate of need was determined for eight medical specialties and five surgical specialties.

Again, the assumption is that 95 percent of the residents in the primary medical service area, 25 percent of the residents in secondary medical service area A, and five percent of the residents in secondary medical service area B would utilize specialty physicians in St. James Parish. **Table 6** presents the ratio between this baseline population of 25,854  $[(23,268 * 0.95 = 22,105) + (6,278 * 0.25 = 1,570) + (43,574 * 0.05 = 2,179) = 25,854]$  and the support of FTEs of specialty physicians given each particular specialty, along with the equivalency of FTEs and

equivalent workdays per week. For example, an FTE of 2.01 general surgeons could be supported, which is equivalent to 10.1 workdays per week. This information is calculated for all the specialty physicians (**Table 6**).

**Table 6**  
**Specialty Physician Need in the Medical Service Area**

Specialty Type	Population to Specialty Physician Ratios	Specialty Physician FTEs	Equivalent Workdays Per Week
<b>Medical Specialties</b>			
Allergy	93,782	0.28	1.4
Cardiology	25,501	1.01	5.1
Gastroenterology	41,111	0.63	3.1
Oncology	46,667	0.55	2.8
Nephrology	65,333	0.40	2.0
Neurology	40,667	0.64	3.2
Pulmonary	58,589	0.44	2.2
Rheumatology	85,557	0.30	1.5
<b>Surgical Specialties</b>			
ENT	35,370	0.73	3.7
General Surgery	12,834	2.01	10.1
Ophthalmology	26,638	0.97	4.9
Orthopedic	16,802	1.54	7.7
Urology	33,974	0.76	3.8

SOURCE: “The Economic Impact of a Rural Primary Care Physician and the Potential Health Dollars Lost to Out-Migrating Health Care Services,” Eilrich, F, Doeksen, G.A., and St. Clair, Cheryl F., National Center for Rural Health Works, Oklahoma State University, January 2007, ([www.ruralhealthworks.org](http://www.ruralhealthworks.org) [April 2010]).

Specialty physicians currently providing services in St. James Parish are listed in **Table 7**. St. James Parish has one full-time surgeon and two part-time surgeons, three part-time cardiologists, one part-time gastroenterologist, one part-time nerve conduction specialist, one

**Table 7**  
**List of Specialty Physicians in St. James Parish, Louisiana**

<b>Physician Name</b>	<b>Type of Practice</b>	<b>Location of Practice</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>FTEs</b>
Dr. Charles McGaff, Jr	Surgery	LaPlace, LA	1/2 Day per Week	0.10
Dr. Surat Donapudi	Surgery	Vacherie, LA	5 Days per Week	1.00
Dr. Mathew Karippellil	Surgery	Gramercy, LA	2 1/2 Days per Week	0.20
Dr. Lewis Siegel	Cardiology	Kenner, LA	1 Day per Month	0.05
Dr. Darrin Breaux	Cardiology	Baton Rouge, LA	1/2 Day Twice a Month	0.05
Dr. Genkat Surakanti	Cardiology	Baton Rouge, LA	1/2 Day Twice a Month	0.05
Dr. Halina Nowakowska	Gastroenterology	Gonzales, LA	1 Day per Week	0.20
Dr. Mary K. Mathai	Nerve Conduction	Kenner, LA	1/2 Day per Week	0.10
Dr. Linda Thompson	Orthopedics	LaPlace, LA	1/2 Day per Week	0.10
Dr. Anthony Decuir	Podiatry	Baton Rouge, LA	2 Days per Month	0.10
Dr. Charles McGaff	Surgery and Wound Care	LaPlace, LA	1/2 Day per Week	0.03
Dr. Clay Boyd	Urology	Metairie, LA	1 Day per Week	0.20
Dr. Stephen Manale	Wound Care	Gonzales, LA	1/2 Day per Week	<u>0.10</u>
<b>Total FTEs</b>				<b><u>2.28</u></b>

SOURCE: St. James Parish Hospital, Physician Roster, April 2010.

part-time orthopedist, one part-time podiatrist, one part-time surgery and wound care specialist, one part-time urologist, and one part-time wound care specialist.

Typically, since smaller, rural populations are able to support only a fraction of a specialty care physician FTE, hospitals or other entities host specialty clinics that have a rotation of specialty care physicians practicing there. The supporting hospital or host entity typically provides the facility and sometimes an office person to help with scheduling. The physician brings clinical staff and completes the billing. In this way, the specialty care physician can provide for the needs of the community residents without the specialty care physician actually residing in the community.

Unique economic impacts are gained through a community utilizing specialty physician clinics; however, the impacts on the local community can be difficult to ascertain. Different diagnoses and specialists will bring differing revenues to the local hospital. Notably, research has shown that by providing specialty clinics in communities, fewer dollars are out-migrated to other communities for laboratory and pharmacy services. A 2006 survey in Louisiana found that over 90 percent of the patients who went out-of-town to visit a specialist also received their laboratory work and pharmacy services at the specialists' locations [7].

### **Summary**

The analysis above presents the methodology and results for estimating the demand for primary care physicians and specialty physicians in St. James Parish, Louisiana. The results for primary care physicians suggest that, given a 95 percent usage rate from the primary medical service area, a 25 percent usage rate from secondary medical service area A, and a five percent usage rate from secondary medical service area B, an estimated 10.0 primary care physicians can be supported. Currently, St. James Parish has 8.5 FTEs of primary care physicians with practices in the Parish. The actual number of primary care physicians that St. James Parish could support will vary

based on the locally-determined usage rates. Estimates of these usage rates should be used in conjunction with the current status of the primary care physicians in St. James Parish to determine the next steps for the community.

In addition to estimating the need for primary care physicians, a methodology was introduced that can assist communities in determining the need for selected specialty physicians. Based on the same assumption of 95 percent usage rate from the primary medical service area, 25 percent usage rate from secondary medical service area A, and five percent usage rate from secondary medical service area B, an FTE of 2.01 general surgeons could be supported in St. James Parish; this is the equivalent of 10.1 days per week. The other selected specialties are also illustrated by FTEs and equivalent workdays per week.

Many assumptions have been made in this analysis. These include items that may change, such as the population in the medical service areas or the delineation of the medical service areas. For example, the assumption of 95 percent usage from the primary medical service area, 25 percent usage from secondary medical service area A, and five percent usage from secondary medical service area B as depicted here, may change due to the exit or entry of physicians or mid-level practitioners from nearby communities. Should this occur, revised estimates of office visits should be calculated.

All assumptions should be closely examined by local decision-makers to verify that they reflect local conditions. If additional local data are available, these data should be utilized to derive the most realistic conclusion possible for St. James Parish.

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**APPENDIX A**  
**SPECIAL STUDY FOR ZIP CODES 70086 AND 70090**

**APPENDIX A:**

**Special Study for Zip Codes 70086 and 70090**

**Introduction**

A special study was requested that focuses on two zip code areas that reside in an area where a natural boundary separates the hospital location from the zip code areas. Because of the limited number of bridges crossing the Mississippi River within St. James Parish, two zip codes were identified that needed special analysis: 70086, St. James and 70090, Vacherie.

**Table 1** presents zip code area populations for the two zip code areas. Zip code information is available on a limited basis from the U. S. Census Bureau; the last reported zip code area populations from the Census were for the year 2000. Therefore, another source will be used, Community Sourcebook of Zip Code Demographics, 23rd Edition, 2009, from ESRI. The ESRI data are population projections for the year 2009. According to the ESRI data, the projected population of the two zip code areas was 10,065.

**Table 1**  
**Populations for Zip Codes 70086 and 70090**

Zip Code	Zip Code Area	2009 ESRI Population
70086	St. James	2,379
70090	Vacherie	<u>7,686</u>
<b>Total</b>		<b>10,065</b>

SOURCE: Community Sourcebook of Zip Code Demographics, 23rd Edition, 2009, ESRI populations.

**Table 2** presents age groups with their corresponding estimated number of annual physician office visits by gender. For instance, for males under age 15, the average number of annual physician office visits is 2.6 visits per year. These data were from the National Ambulatory Health Care Survey: 2006 Summary from the U. S. Department of Health and Human Services, released in August 2008 [1,2,3].

**Table 2**  
**Annual Primary Care Physician Office Visits by Age Group**

Age Group	Male Visit Rate <sup>1</sup>	Female Visit Rate <sup>1</sup>
< 15	2.6	2.6
15-24	1.1	2.4
25-44	1.6	3.0
45-64	3.0	3.9
65-74	5.5	6.0
75+	7.1	7.3

<sup>1</sup>Source: Annual visit rates by gender and age groups, U. S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center of Health Statistics, "National Ambulatory Medical Care Survey: 2006 Summary," No. 3, August 2008.

**Table 3**, utilizing the annual primary care physician office visits by age group, presents the number of annual physician office visits generated in the two zip code areas. These were estimated by multiplying the 2009 estimated population by age and gender groups for the medical service areas by the estimated number of annual physician office visits. Of these total office visits, recent data indicate that 58.4 percent of total physician office visits will be made to physicians active in primary patient care while the remainder will be made to specialists [3].

Using the office visit data presented in **Table 3**, the two zip code areas will generate 31,350 total annual physician office visits. Local primary care physician office visits were then

**Table 3**  
**Annual Primary Care Physician Office Visits Generated in Zip Code Areas**  
**70086 and 70090**

Age	Male			Female			Total Visits
	2009 Population <sup>1</sup>	Visit Rate <sup>2</sup>	Visits	2009 Population <sup>1</sup>	Visit Rate <sup>2</sup>	Visits	
<b>Selected Zip Code Area</b>							
< 15	1,056	2.6	2,746	1,038	2.6	2,698	5,444
15-24	729	1.1	802	780	2.4	1,873	2,675
25-44	1,258	1.6	2,012	1,264	3.0	3,792	5,804
45-64	1,288	3.0	3,864	1,379	3.9	5,380	9,244
65-74	302	5.5	1,663	399	6.0	2,392	4,055
75+	<u>227</u>	7.1	<u>1,611</u>	<u>345</u>	7.3	<u>2,517</u>	<u>4,128</u>
<b>Subtotal</b>	4,860		12,698	5,205		16,135	<b>31,350</b>
<b>Local Primary Care Office Visits Per Year (58.4 percent of total)</b>							<b>18,308</b>

<sup>1</sup> Source: 2008 population estimates, U. S. Census Bureau (www.census.gov [April 2010]).

<sup>2</sup> Source: Annual visit rates by gender and age groups, U. S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center of Health Statistics, "National Ambulatory Medical Care Survey: 2006 Summary," No. 3, August 2008.

calculated, based on the 58.4 percent, resulting in a total of 18,308 primary care physician office visits in the two zip code area.

The total number of primary care office visits given various usage rates is presented in **Table 4** for the two zip code area. The national average for the number of annual office visits to

**Table 4**  
**Primary Care Physician Office Visits Given Usage**  
**By Local Residents in the Zip Code Areas of 70086 and 70090**

<b>Usage by Residents of Zip Codes 70086 and 70090</b>						
70%	75%	80%	85%	90%	95%	100%
12,816	13,731	14,646	15,562	16,477	<b>17,393</b>	18,308

If 95% then the usage would be:  
17,393 total primary care physician office visits  
for an estimated **3.0 Total Primary Care Physicians**  
Based on 5,000 average annual primary care office visits per physician practice

each primary care physician is 5,000 [3]. *Based on the assumption that utilization will be 95 percent for the two zip code area, St. James Parish will need an estimated 3.0 full-time equivalent (FTE) primary care physicians to service the two zip code area.*