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# 2019 Women's Health and Oncologist Workforce Analysis



Physician shortages represent a significant threat to the U.S. medical system in the years to come. In the case of diseases such as cancer, future shortages in oncology could have a serious and specific impact to women's healthcare.

## INTRODUCTION

Cancer is the second leading cause of death for women in the U.S.<sup>1</sup> And of those deaths, breast and lung cancer are the top two deadliest. To put this in proper perspective, one out of every eight American women will develop invasive breast cancer<sup>2</sup> and one out of every 17 will develop lung cancer over the course of her lifetime<sup>3</sup>.

And the demand for cancer treatment is expected to grow by 40 percent over the next six years. The American Society of Clinical Oncology (ASCO) is projecting a shortage of over 2,200 oncologists by 2025<sup>4</sup>. Oncologists, perhaps more so than many specialists, carry heavy and time-sensitive workloads. Researching their patient's cancer types, executing complex treatment regimens, as well as monitoring their patient's health during and after treatment requires oncologists to respond quickly, as timing can often make the difference between the success or failure of treatment. In addition, oncologists take on the burden of helping their patients process diagnoses that are often emotionally devastating.

Compounding all this is the imminent retirement wave expected in the specialty. Thirty-seven of the 50 metropolitan statistical areas (MSAs) we examined had 20 percent or more practicing oncologists already over the age of 65. In communities where access to an oncologist is already limited, cancer patients may experience lags between screening, diagnosis, and treatment.

Drawing on the Doximity profiles of more than 18,000 licensed specialists in this field, we examined and compared workloads, age, and the number of locally-trained oncologists to identify the U.S. metros where shortages may appear first.

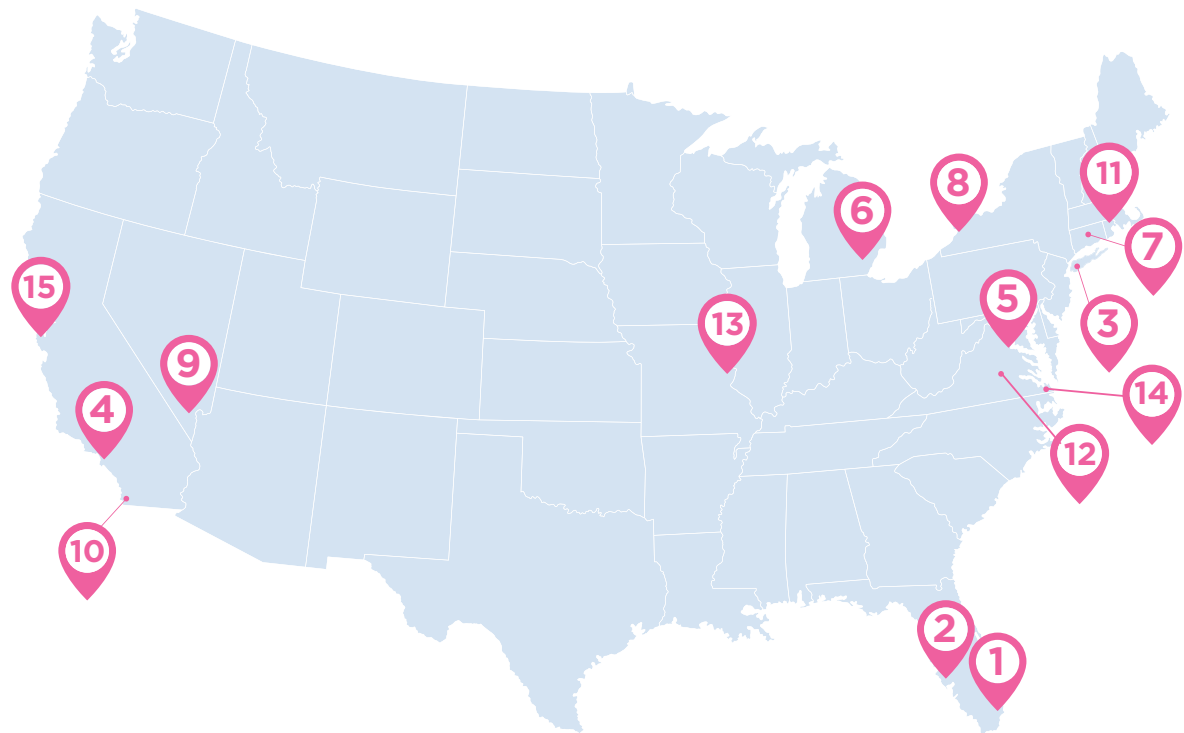
With more than 70 percent of all U.S. doctors as members, Doximity is the country's largest professional medical network. As such, Doximity is uniquely positioned to study this issue on both a local and national level.



## KEY FINDINGS

### *MSAs With Oncologists Nearing Retirement*

In several U.S. metros, we found both a higher rate of breast cancer among women and a large portion of oncologists nearing retirement age (over the age of 65). A recent survey of oncologists indicates that the expected retirement age is around 64 years old. It also stated that any oncologist still in the workforce at this age will plan to retire within the next three to four years.<sup>5</sup>



**Top 15 MSAs with HIGHEST percentage of oncologists above retirement age**

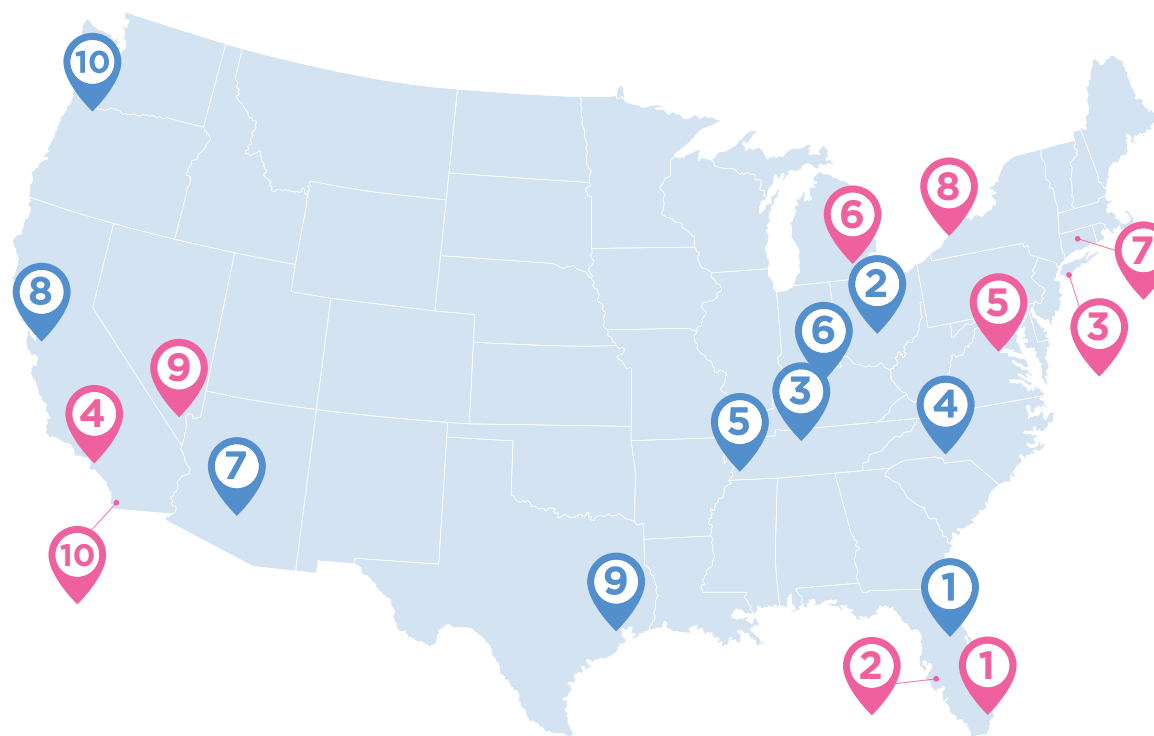
1	Miami	35%
2	North Port, Fla.	33%
3	New York City	30%
4	Los Angeles	30%
5	Washington D.C.	30%
6	Detroit	29%
7	Hartford, Conn.	28%
8	Buffalo, N.Y.	28%

9	Las Vegas	28%
10	San Diego	27%
11	Providence, R.I.	27%
12	Richmond, Va.	26%
13	St. Louis	26%
14	Virginia Beach, Va.	26%
15	San Francisco	26%

## KEY FINDINGS

### *Risk Index: Highest and Lowest Risk MSAs for a Shortage of Oncologists*

Doximity developed a composite index score to assess how severe the risk of shortages will be in each of the top 50 MSAs. In the metros with higher percentages of older oncologists, we expect there to be a greater risk of shortages.



#### MSAs with the HIGHEST Risk of Shortages

1	Miami
2	North Port, Fla.
3	New York City
4	Los Angeles
5	Washington D.C.
6	Detroit
7	Hartford, Conn.
8	Buffalo, N.Y.
9	Las Vegas
10	San Diego

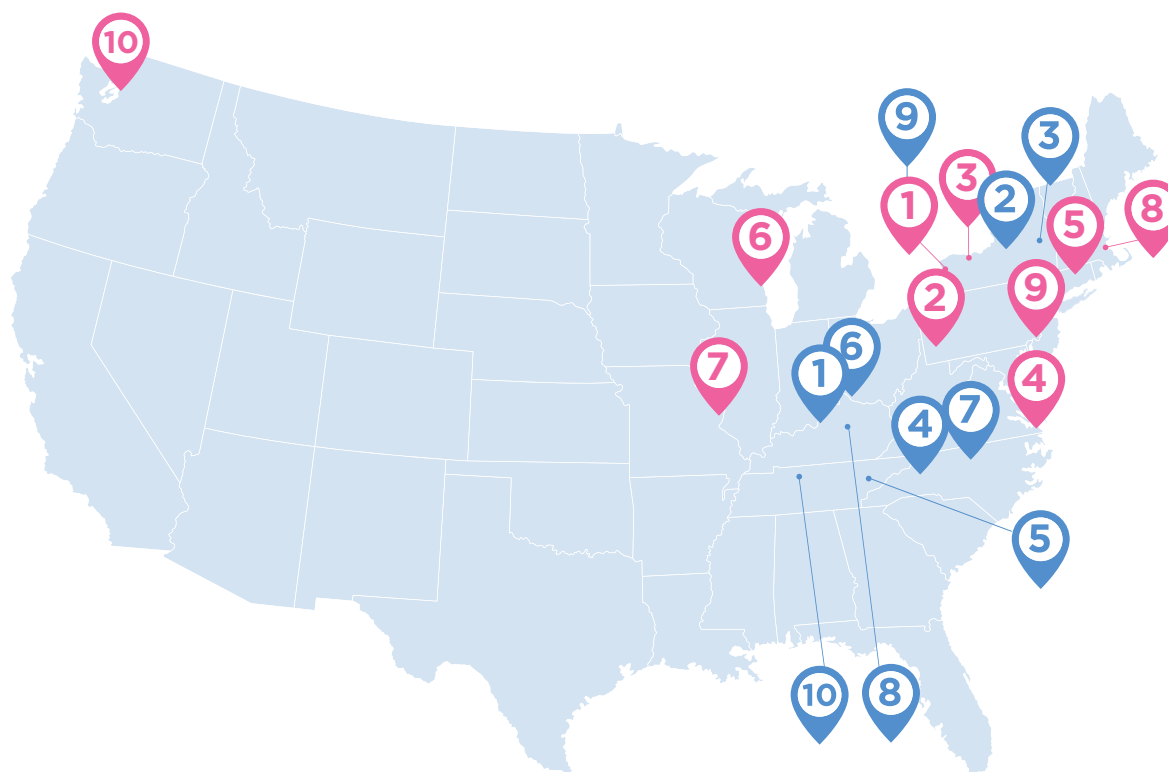
#### MSAs with the LOWEST Risk of Shortages

1	Orlando, Fla.
2	Columbus, Ohio
3	Nashville, Tenn.
4	Charlotte, N.C.
5	Memphis, Tenn.
6	Louisville, Ky.
7	Phoenix
8	San Jose, Calif.
9	Houston
10	Portland, Ore.

## KEY FINDINGS

### *Metropolitan Areas with the Highest Rates of Breast and Lung Cancer*

To better understand workload demands for oncologists, we evaluated the rates of breast and lung cancer in women between the ages of 40–75 across U.S. MSAs.



**MSAs with the HIGHEST Number of Women with Breast Cancer Per 100,000**

1	Buffalo, N.Y.	352
2	Pittsburgh	348
3	Rochester, N.Y.	345
4	Virginia Beach, Va.	341
5	Hartford, Conn.	338
6	Milwaukee	335
7	St. Louis	331
8	Boston	329
9	Philadelphia	325
10	Seattle	325

**MSAs with the HIGHEST Number of Women with Lung Cancer Per 100,000**

1	Louisville, Ky.	87
2	Syracuse, N.Y.	86
3	Albany, N.Y.	85
4	Winston-Salem, N.C.	84
5	Knoxville, Tenn.	82
6	Cincinnati	81
7	Greensboro, N.C.	80
8	Lexington, Ky.	79
9	Buffalo, N.Y.	78
10	Nashville, Tenn.	76

The growing workload demands, increasing number of retiring oncologists, and talent retention challenges are critical concerns for breast and lung cancer patients. We hope this study will serve as a helpful resource to training facilities, policymakers, patient advocates, and others interested in further studying this topic. This information may also be helpful for oncologists looking to live in areas with a growing need for specialists in their field.

## METHODOLOGY

Doximity's study is drawn from CMS data, board certification data, and self-reported data on more than 18,000 full-time, board-certified oncology practitioners. Responses were mapped across metropolitan statistical areas (MSAs). The top 50 MSAs which have the highest number of women with breast cancer were selected by the population of women above age 40, according to 2010 Census data. MSAs which have the highest number of patients with lung cancer across all ages were ranked by using data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

## REFERENCES

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