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## Report warns of looming doctor shortage

By [WILL ASTOR](#) - 1/22/2010 2:44:51 PM

The Rochester area is at risk of seeing its physician supply fall to dangerously low levels, a Finger Lakes Health Systems Agency and Monroe Medical Society report concludes.

"Availability of Physician Services in the Rochester Area, 2009," looks at the present and likely future supply of doctors in the region covering Monroe, Ontario, Wayne, Livingston, Seneca and Yates counties.

While the region has more doctors than the national average, a high percentage the roughly 3,000 physicians practicing here are expected to retire within the next few years and may not be easily replaced, the report states.

"This report validates our concerns about physician retention and recruitment," Monroe County Medical Society executive director Nancy Adams said in a statement. "If many of our local physicians retire, as expected, and we don't take the steps necessary to recruit younger doctors to replace them, we could face a scenario where local patients have to travel elsewhere for surgery or other treatments."

Findings of the report include:

Rochester-area physicians' current average age is 50.5 years;  
19 percent are 60 or older; and  
One-third of physicians who responded to a recent MCMS survey said they plan to retire within the next 10 years and others said they plan to cut their practice hours.

Factors that survey respondents see as discouraging physicians from practicing in this area include reimbursement rates lagging other areas of the state and country, growing administrative burdens and fragmentation of the local service system.

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