PHYSICIAN EMPLOYMENT SURGES, STAFFING SHORTAGES LOOM

Nearly 3 of 4 physicians are now employed by hospitals, health systems and other corporate entities such as private equity firms and health insurers, study results released in April by the Physicians Advocacy Institute reveal. Other findings from that report include:

- 108,700 physicians shifted to employment since January 2019. This growth split nearly evenly between hospital employees (58,200 additional physician employees) and other corporate entities (50,500 additional physician employees).
- Of those, 83,000 physicians (76%) became employees since the pandemic began.
- 2021 alone saw a marked increase in employed physicians, growing by 19%, from 69.3% to 73.9% of all physicians.

Exacerbating concerns about the effects of a decreasing number of independent physicians, a separate study in Human Resources for Health in February 2020 projects a national net shortage of 139,160 physicians by 2030.

McKinsey & Company also released a US nursing workforce assessment in early May that projects a gap of between 200,000 to 450,000 nurses available for direct patient care, equating to a 10 to 20% gap, by 2025. To meet this demand, the analysts conclude the US would need to more than double the number of new graduates entering and staying in the nursing workforce every year for the next three years.

HAVE YOU HEARD?

Representatives Neal Dunn, MD (R-FL-2), Ronny Jackson, MD (R-TX-13), and Mariannette Miller-Meeks, MD (R-IA-2), are among Congress’s newest ASC advocates and cosponsors of the Outpatient Surgery Quality and Access Act of 2021. Thank you, Drs. Dunn, Jackson and Miller-Meeks for supporting the ASC community!

MEDICARE ADVANTAGE ENROLLMENT CONTINUES TO RISE

New Medicare enrollment figures from the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) show the continued rise of Medicare Advantage (MA). In 2017, 2/3 of Medicare beneficiaries were covered by traditional fee-for-service (FFS) Medicare, but as of January 2022, 46% of beneficiaries are now covered by MA. The chart below shows the percentage of beneficiaries covered by FFS Medicare and by MA over the past 5 years.

View the full studies referenced here and subscribe at www.ascassociation.org/ascphysicianbrief.