



## Survey: Wait Times For A Doctor Appointment Longest In Boston, Shortest In Dallas

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Fewer Than 50% of Physicians Accept Medicaid

IRVING, Texas, Jan. 29, 2014 /PRNewswire/ -- Need to see a family physician, dermatologist or an obstetrician/gynecologist? Get in line, because it could take weeks to schedule an appointment, a new survey indicates.

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(Logo: <http://photos.prnewswire.com/prnh/20140129/LA54356LOGO-b>)

Conducted by Merritt Hawkins, a national physician search and consulting firm and a company of AMN Healthcare, the survey of 1,399 medical offices tracks the average time needed to schedule a doctor appointment in 15 large metropolitan areas. The survey reports average doctor appointment wait times in five different medical specialties: cardiology, dermatology, obstetrics/gynecology, orthopedic surgery and family practice.

Boston is experiencing the longest average doctor appointment wait times of the 15 metro markets examined in the survey: 72 days to see a dermatologist, 66 days to see a family physician, 46 days to see an ob/gyn, 27 days to see a cardiologist, and 16 days to see an orthopedic surgeon.

On average, it takes over 45 days to schedule a doctor appointment in the Boston area, the survey indicates. In each of the three years Merritt Hawkins has released the survey (2004, 2009, 2014) Boston has averaged the longest physician appointment wait times among the 15 cities.

Other average physician appointment wait times tracked by the survey include 28 days to see a cardiologist in Denver, 49 days to see a dermatologist in Philadelphia, 35 days to see an ob/gyn in Portland, 18 days to see an orthopedic surgeon in San Diego, and 26 days to see a family physician in New York. Physician appointment wait times tracked in the survey varied from as little as one day to over eight months, with an overall average in all metro areas and all specialties of about 19 days.

"Finding a physician who can see you today, or three weeks from today, can be a challenge, even in urban areas where there is a high ratio of physicians per population," said Mark Smith, president of Merritt Hawkins. "The demand for doctors is simply outstripping the supply."

The survey also tracks how many physician practices accept Medicaid as a form of payment in the 15 metro markets. Boston has the highest rate of Medicaid acceptance tracked in the survey at 73%, while Dallas has the lowest at 23%. The overall average rate of Medicaid acceptance for all five specialties in all 15 markets is 45.7%, the survey indicates.

Many physicians are not accepting Medicaid because it often pays less than what it costs physicians to provide care, according to Smith. Medicaid patients, and patients with private insurance, often seek "convenient care" in hospital emergency departments when they cannot access office-based physicians in a timely manner. The problem of physician access could become more pronounced as millions of previously uninsured patients obtain coverage through the Affordable Care Act, according to Smith.

"Having health insurance does not always ensure access to a physician," Smith said. "More physicians will need to be trained, and access to other types of providers expanded, to ensure that health care delayed does not become health care denied."

Additional information about Merritt Hawkins 2014 Survey of Physician Appointment Wait Times and Medicaid and Medicare Acceptance Rates can be accessed at [www.merrithawkins.com](http://www.merrithawkins.com).

### About Merritt Hawkins

Merritt Hawkins is the leading physician search and consulting firm in the United States and is a company of AMN Healthcare (NYSE: AHS) the innovator of healthcare staffing solutions and the nation's largest healthcare staffing organization.

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