

## Physician Assistants (PAs)

This section provides a detailed analysis of the number, distribution, and selected characteristics of physician assistants (PAs) currently practicing in Wyoming.

### Verification Data

#### Overview

In 2007, 175 PAs held active licenses to practice in the State of Wyoming, according to the records of the Wyoming Board of Medicine<sup>24</sup>. A list of these active licensees was used to conduct a Physician Assistant Workforce Survey that gathered data on PAs practicing in the state through various methods including paper surveys, phone surveys, and website searches. This approach produced a 96% *verification* rate of PAs currently practicing in Wyoming. While this process was ideal for obtaining basic practice information, it did not accumulate complete survey data for all practicing PAs. **Therefore, the first part of this section presents basic practice information gathered through the overall verification process (N=175), while the remainder of the section presents data collected only through returned paper surveys (N=109).**

As shown in Figure 30, 146 (83%) of Wyoming's 175 actively licensed PAs are currently practicing at least part-time in Wyoming. These 146 equate to 28 PAs per 100,000 population, well above the national average of 19 (as shown in Figure 31).<sup>25</sup>

Figure 30 : WY Physician Assistants

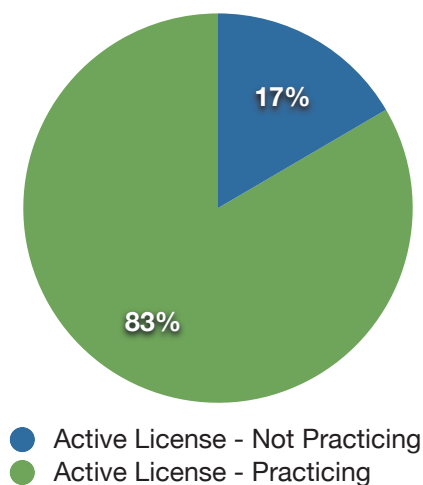
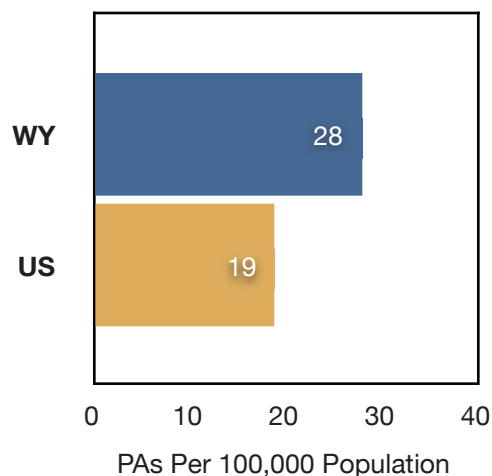


Figure 31: Physician Assistant to Population Ratio



<sup>24</sup> There are currently zero PAs licensed in Wyoming who work solely in a federal facility in Wyoming.

<sup>25</sup> Data on non-federal physician assistants per 100,000 civilian population retrieved November 19, 2007 from the Kaiser Family Foundation at <http://www.kff.org/insurance/7031/ti2004-5-8.cfm>. All Wyoming population data retrieved November 19, 2007 from the US Census Bureau at <http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/56000.html>.

Figure 32 indicates the total number of PAs verified as practicing in each of Wyoming’s 23 counties. Wyoming presently has zero PAs working as Locum Tenens. Natrona County has the most practicing PAs in the state (21% of the state total), while Niobrara County currently does not have a PA. Combined, Laramie and Natrona Counties employ 36% of Wyoming’s total practicing PAs.

**Figure 32: Total Practicing Physician Assistants by County N=175**

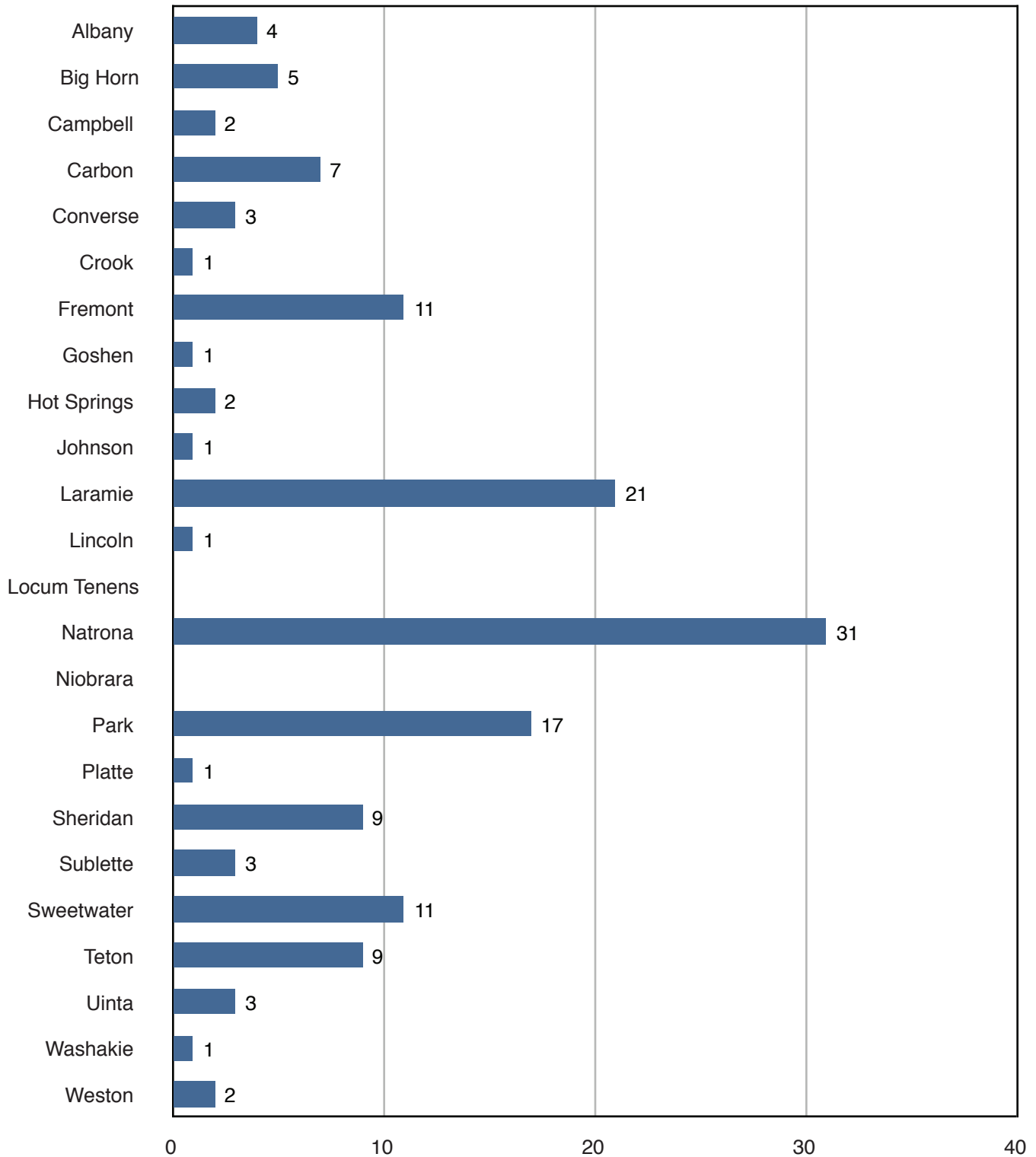
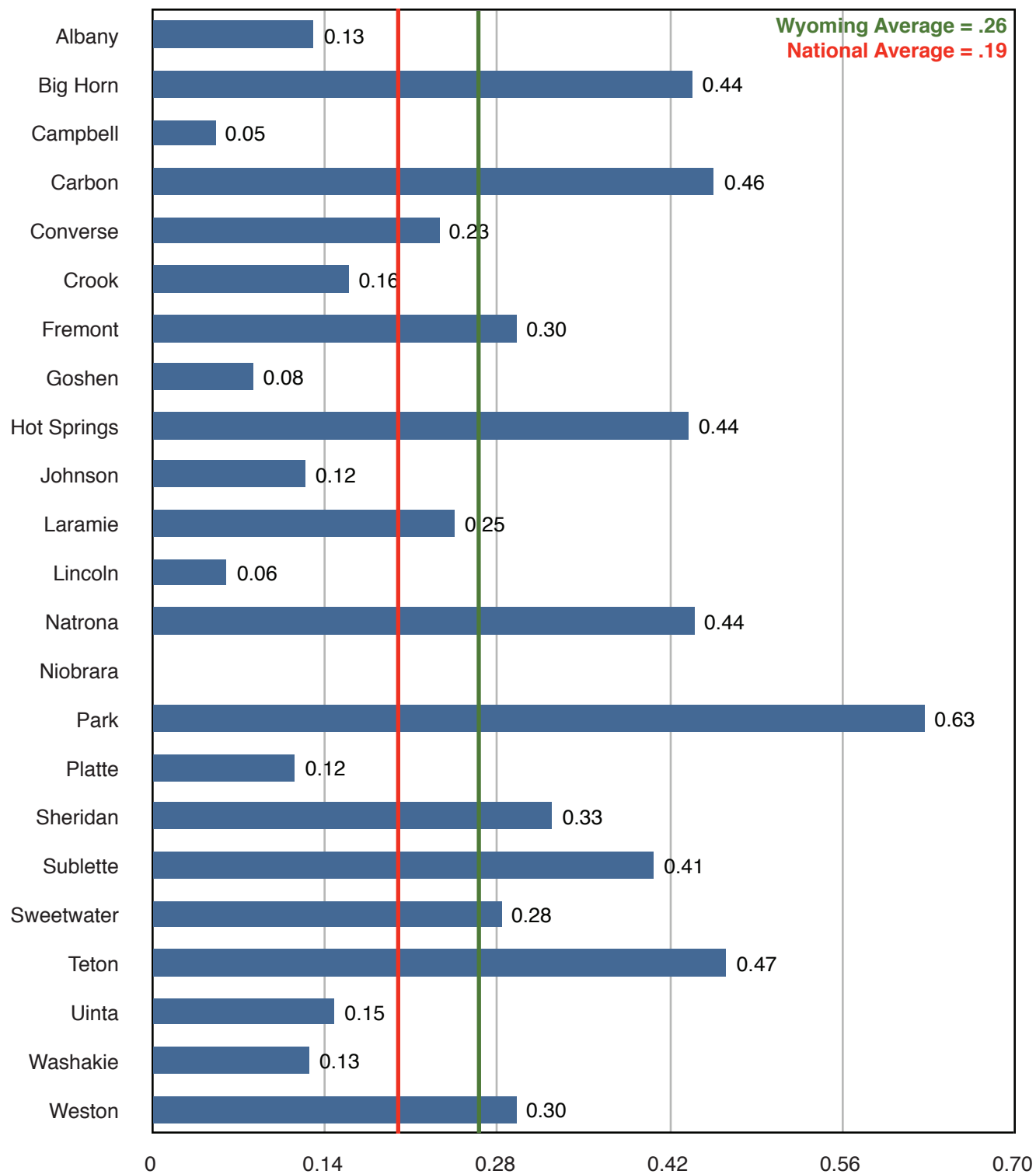


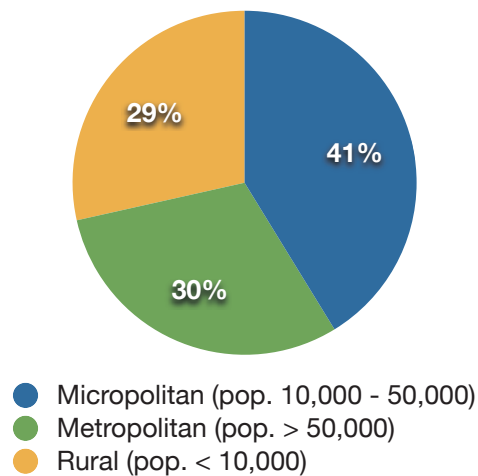
Figure 33 displays by county the total number of practicing PAs per 1,000 population. Wyoming's average PA to population ratio is 0.26 per 1,000 county population. Park County has the highest PA to population ratio with 0.63, over twice the state average. Teton County ranks second with 0.47. There is currently not a PA practicing in Niobrara County, and there is only 0.05 PAs per 1000 population in Campbell County.

**Figure 33: Total Practicing Physician Assistants Per 1,000 County Population N=175**

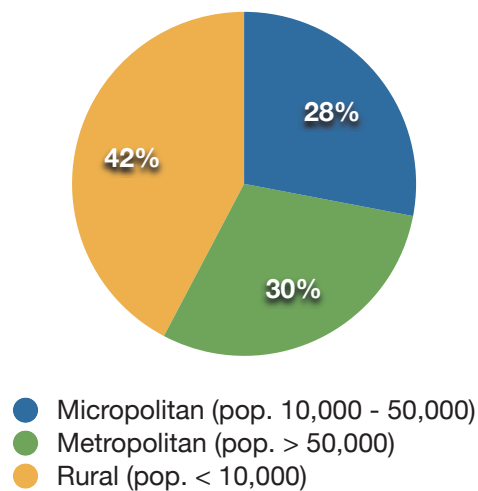


Wyoming is a frontier state, where an estimated 515,004 people live in 97,100 square miles (5.3 persons per square mile). The United States Census Bureau has designated Laramie and Natrona Counties as Metropolitan Statistical Areas and Albany, Campbell, Fremont, Sheridan, Sweetwater, Teton, and Unita Counties as Micropolitan Statistical Areas. A Metropolitan area contains a core urban area population greater than 50,000, and a Micropolitan Statistical Area contains a core urban area population between 10,000 and 50,000. All other Wyoming counties are designated as rural. Rural refers to any area containing a population of less than 10,000. Figures 34 and 35 break down Wyoming's population by Census designation and illustrate the geographic distribution of physician assistants in the state based upon the same criteria.<sup>26</sup> Figure 36 displays the geographic distribution of physician assistants in Wyoming topographically.

**Figure 34: Wyoming Population Distribution**

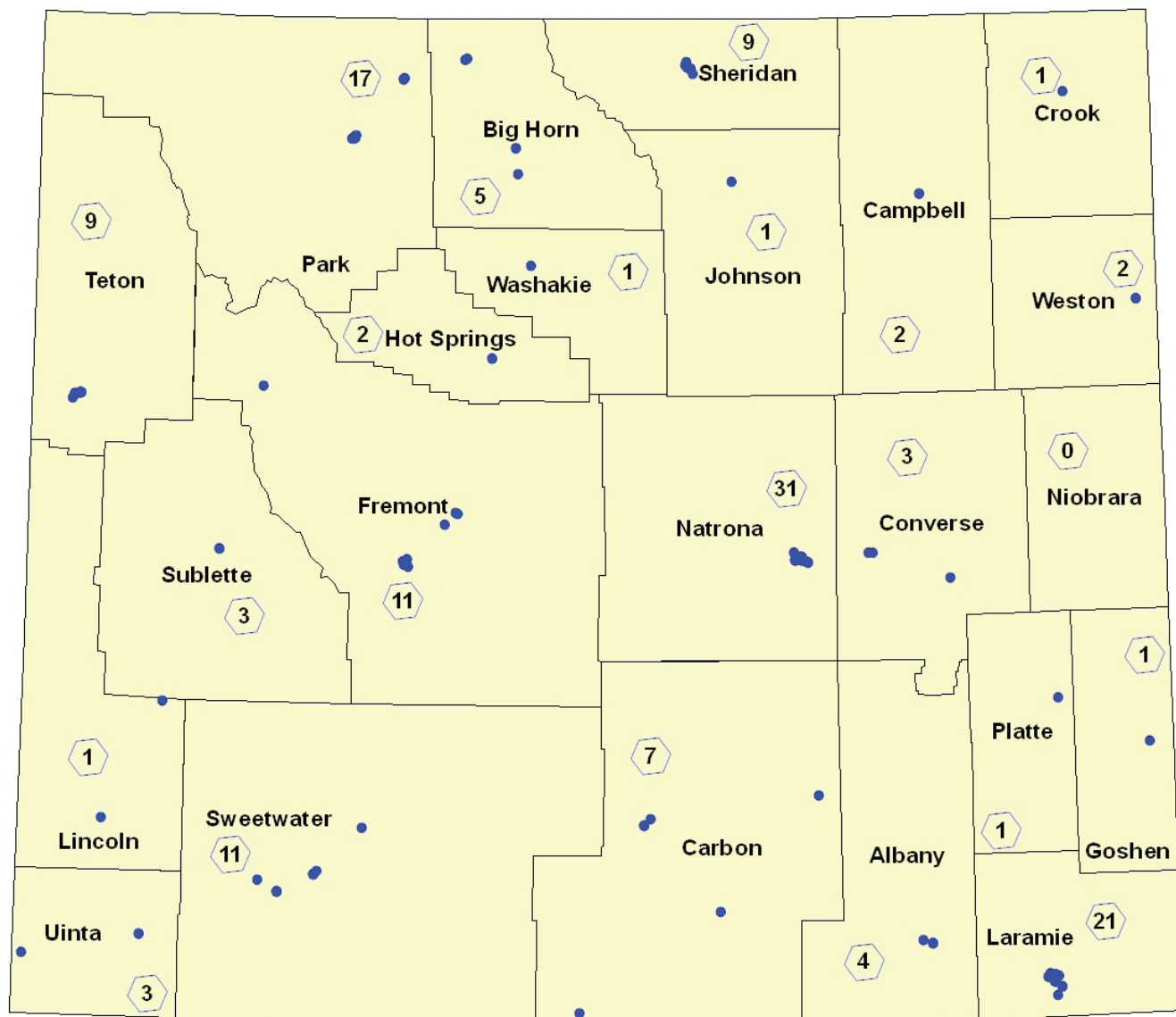


**Figure 35: Wyoming Physician Assistant Distribution N=175**



<sup>26</sup> US Census Bureau designations retrieved November 21, 2007 from [http://www.census.gov/population/www/estimates/metro\\_general/2006/List1.txt](http://www.census.gov/population/www/estimates/metro_general/2006/List1.txt).

Figure 36: Physician Assistant Distribution Map N=175<sup>27</sup>



<sup>27</sup> **Note:** Points on the map indicate physician assistant locations and the numbers surrounded by hexagons indicate total number of physician assistants in the county.

### Survey Response Data

The remainder of the PA section relies upon the data collected from the returned Physician Assistant Workforce Survey, as well as supplemental data from sources such as the Kaiser Family Foundation and the US Census Bureau.

#### Work Status

Overall, 68% of Wyoming-licensed physician assistants responded to the Physician Assistant Workforce Survey. As shown in Figure 37, the majority of PAs (74%) work forty hours or more per week.

**Figure 37: Physician Assistant Work Status N=109**

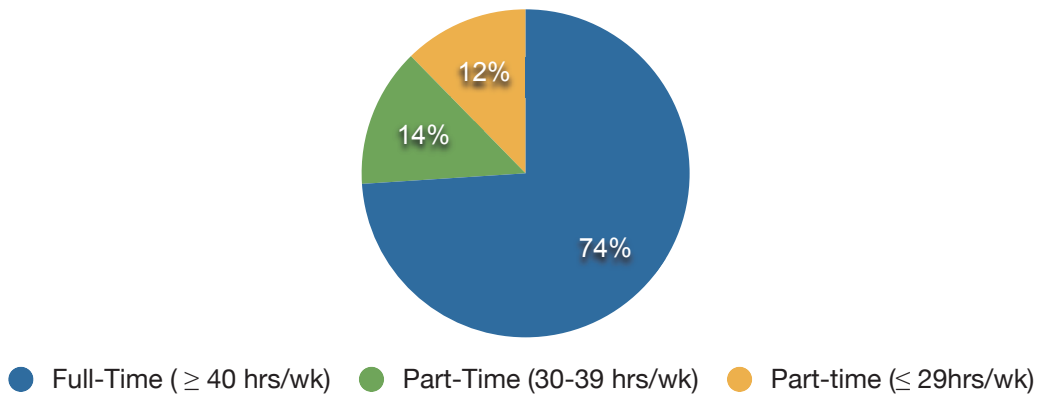


Figure 38 displays PA work status by county. The largest percentage of PAs work in Natrona (23%), Park (12%) and Laramie (10%) Counties.

**Figure 38: Physician Assistant Work Status by County N=109**

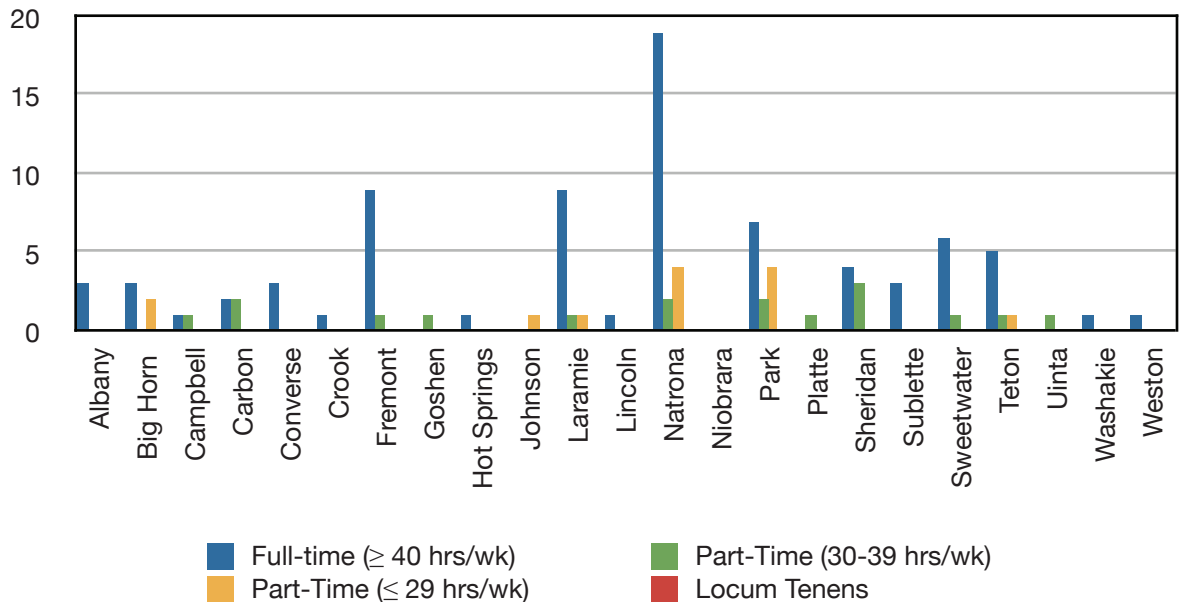


Table 17 provides a detailed analysis by county of the actual number of PAs who responded. Overall, 72% of PAs responded that they work at least forty hours per week.

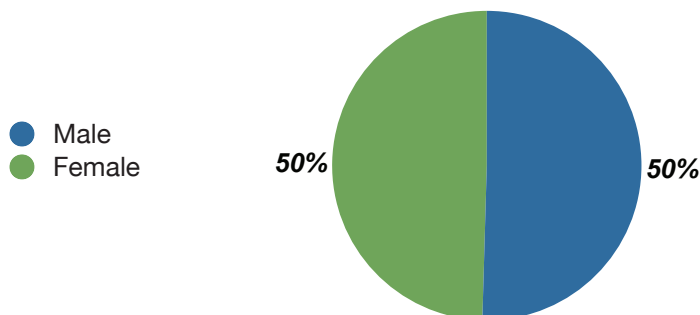
**Table 17: Physician Assistant Work Status by County N=109**

County	Full-Time (≥ 40 hrs/wk)	Part-Time (30-39 hrs/wk)	Part-Time (≤ 29 hrs/wk)	Locum Tenens	Percentage of Verified PAs	Total Number of Providers
Albany	3 (100%)				75%	3
Big Horn	3 (60%)		2 (40%)		100%	5
Campbell	1 (50%)	1 (50%)			100%	2
Carbon	2 (50%)	2 (50%)			57.10%	4
Converse	3 (100%)				100%	3
Crook	1 (100%)				100%	1
Fremont	9 (90%)	1 (10%)			90.90%	10
Goshen		1 (100%)			100%	1
Hot Springs	1 (100%)				50%	1
Johnson			1 (100%)		100%	1
Laramie	9 (82%)	1 (9%)	1 (9%)		52.30%	11
Lincoln	1 (100%)				100%	1
Natrona	19 (76%)	2 (8%)	4 (16%)		80.60%	25
Niobrara						
Park	7 (54%)	2 (15%)	4 (31%)		76.50%	13
Platte		1 (100%)			100%	1
Sheridan	4 (57%)	3 (43%)			77.80%	7
Sublette	3 (100%)				100%	3
Sweetwater	6 (86%)	1 (14%)			63.60%	7
Teton	5 (71%)	1 (14%)	1 (14%)		77.80%	7
Uinta		1 (100%)			33.30%	1
Washakie	1 (100%)				100%	1
Weston	1 (100%)				50%	1
<b>Wyoming</b>	<b>79 (72%)</b>	<b>17 (16%)</b>	<b>13 (12%)</b>	<b>0</b>		<b>109</b>

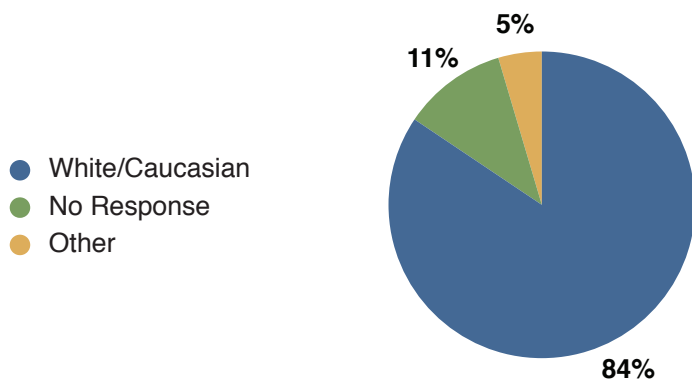
**Demographics**

As seen in Figure 39, nearly half of all PA respondents were female (49%), below the nation average of 61%.<sup>28</sup> Figure 40 shows that the vast majority of PAs reported they are White/Caucasian (84%), below the national average of 89%.<sup>29</sup> Figure 41 indicates that 35% of PAs are 40 years of age or younger, while 36% are between 51 and 60 years of age.

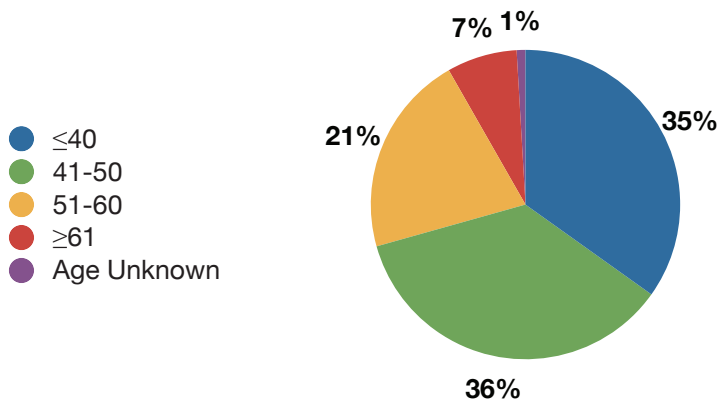
**Figure 39: Physician Assistant Gender N=109**



**Figure 40: Physician Assistant Ethnicity N=109**



**Figure 41: Physician Assistant Age N=109**



<sup>28</sup>Department of Health and Human Services, Bureau of Health Professions. HRSA state health workforce profiles: Wyoming. Retrieved from <http://bhpr.hrsa.gov/healthworkforce/reports/statesummaries/wyoming.htm>.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.



Table 18 breaks down PA respondents by age and gender and illustrates the increase in number of females entering the field of medicine: 58% of PAs forty years of age or younger are female compared to 13% age sixty-one years or older.

**Table 18: Physician Assistant Age and Gender Breakdown N=109**

Age Group	Female	Male	Total
≤ 40	22 (57.9%)	16 (42.1%)	38 (34.9%)
41-50	19 (48.7%)	20 (51.3%)	39 (35.8%)
51-60	11 (47.8%)	12 (52.2%)	23 (21.1%)
≥ 61	1 (12.5%)	7 (87.5%)	8 (7.3%)
age unknown	1 (100%)		1 (.9%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>54 (49.5%)</b>	<b>55 (50.5%)</b>	<b>109</b>

**Specialties<sup>30</sup>**

As shown in Table 19, the majority of PAs who responded to the survey reported specializing in Family Medicine (51%), followed by Orthopedics (14%), Internal Medicine (6%) and Urgent Care (5%). Table 20 displays self-reported PA specialties by county.

**Table 19: Self-Reported Physician Assistant Specialties N=109**

Specialty	Number of PAs (%)	Female (%)	Male (%)
Cardiology	4 (4%)	4 (100%)	
Dermatology	1 (1%)		1 (100%)
Emergency Medicine	3 (3%)	1	2
Family medicine	56 (51%)	26 (46%)	30 (54%)
Gastroenterology	2 (2%)	1 (50%)	1 (50%)
General Surgery	3 (3%)	3 (100%)	
Hematology/Oncology	1 (1%)		1 (100%)
Industrial Medicine	2 (2%)		2 (100%)
Infectious Diseases	1 (1%)		1 (100%)
Internal Medicine	7 (6%)	5 (71%)	2 (29%)
Obstetrics/Gynecology	1 (1%)	1 (100%)	
Oncology	1 (1%)		1 (100%)
Orthopedics	15 (14%)	5 (33%)	10 (67%)
Pediatrics	2 (2%)	2 (100%)	
Psychiatry	1 (1%)	1 (100%)	
Radiology	1 (1%)		1 (100%)
Surgical Specialty	2 (2%)	2 (100%)	
Urgent Care	5 (5%)	3 (60%)	2 (40%)
Urology	1 (1%)		1 (100%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>109</b>	<b>54 (49.5%)</b>	<b>55 (50.5%)</b>

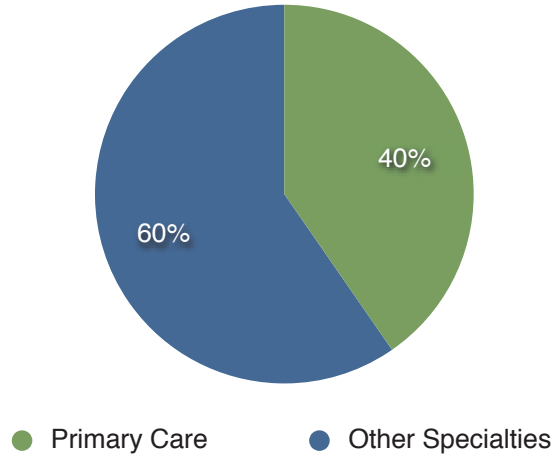
<sup>30</sup> **Note:** Formal training and or certification for **self-reported** specialty designation has not been verified.

**Table 20: Self-Reported Physician Assistant Specialties by County N=109**

Specialty	Total	Albany	Big Horn	Campbell	Carbon	Converse	Crook	Fremont	Goshen	Hot Springs	Johnson	Laramie	Lincoln	Natrona	Niobrara	Park	Platte	Sheridan	Sublette	Sweetwater	Teton	Uinta	Washakie	Weston
Total	109	3	5	2	4	3	1	10	1	1	1	11	1	25	13	1	1	7	3	7	7	1	1	1
Cardiology	4											1		2										
Dermatology	1																							
Emergency Medicine	3				1									1							1			
Family Medicine	56	1	5	1	3	2	1	6	1	1	1	3	1	11	4		2	3	5	3	3	1		1
Gastroenterology	2											1		1										
General Surgery	3							1						2										
Hematology/Oncology	1																	1						
Industrial Medicine	2																			2				
Infectious Diseases	1																							
Internal Medicine	7											3		1			1	2						
Obstetrics/Gynecology	1																							
Oncology	1																							
Orthopedics	15	2				1		1				1		1		5		1			2			1
Pediatrics	2			1																				
Psychiatry	1													1										
Radiology	1							1																
Surgical Specialty	2											1		1										
Urgent Care	5							1				1		3										
Urology	1													1										

Figure 42 displays the percentage of Wyoming's PAs practicing in primary care, Table 21 displays Wyoming primary care specialties by age and county, and Table 22 breaks down primary care physicians by age and gender. Figure 43 illustrates the narrowing of the gender gap in the primary care field. Designations of primary care specialties were based upon the Association of American Medical College's definition, which includes the specialties of adolescent medicine, family medicine, general practice, geriatric medicine, internal medicine, internal medicine/pediatrics and pediatrics.

**Figure 42: WY Primary Care PAs Compared to Other PA Specialties N=109**



**Figure 43: Wyoming Primary Care PAs by Age and Gender N=109**

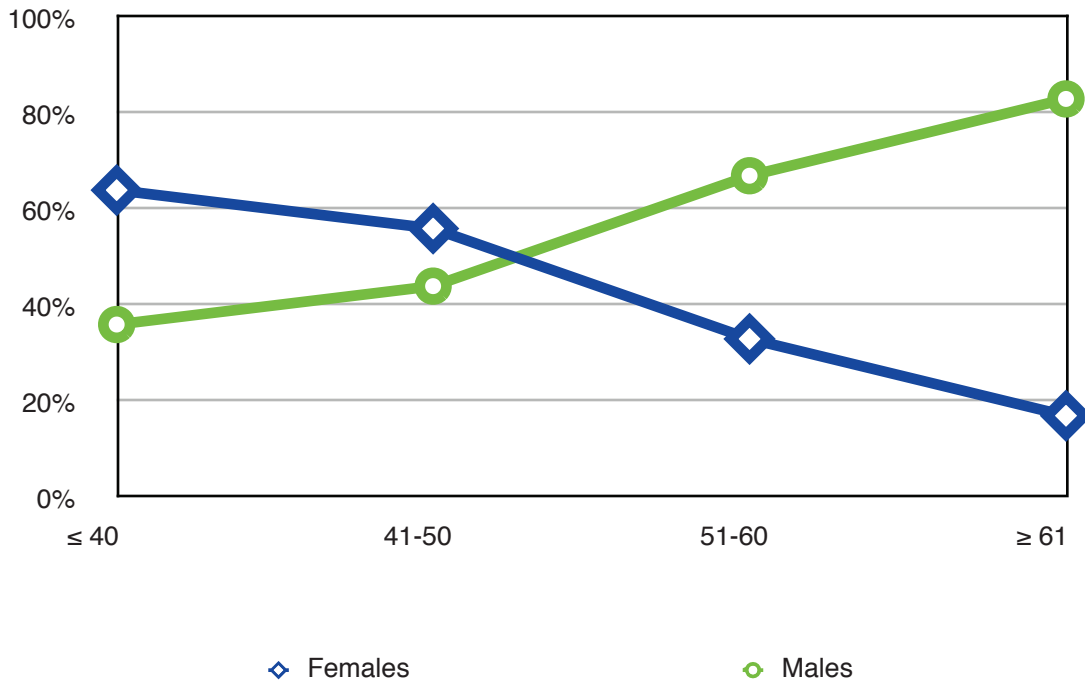


Table 21: WY Self-Reported PA Primary Care Specialties by Gender and County N=109

Specialty	Gender	Albany	Big Horn	Campbell	Carbon	Converse	Crook	Fremont	Goshen	Hot Springs	Johnson	Laramie	Lincoln	Locum Tenens	Natrona	Niobrara	Park	Platte	Sheridan	Sublette	Sweetwater	Teton	Uinta	Washakie	Weston	Grand Total
<b>Total</b>		1	5	2	3	2	1	6	1	1	1	6	1		11		5	1	5	3	5	3	1		1	65
<b>Family Medicine</b>	<b>Female</b>	1	2		1	1	3		1	1	1	1			4		4		2	1	2	1	1			26
	<b>Male</b>		3	1	2	1	1	3	1			2	1		7					2	3	2			1	30
<b>General Practice</b>	<b>Female</b>																									
	<b>Male</b>																									
<b>Internal Medicine</b>	<b>Female</b>											1						1	1	2						5
	<b>Male</b>											2														2
<b>Pediatrics</b>	<b>Female</b>			1																1						2
	<b>Male</b>																									

**Table 22: WY Primary Care PAs by Age, Gender, and County N=109**

Counties	All Ages		≤ 40		41-50		51-60		≥ 61		Age Unknown	
	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M
<b>Total</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>
Albany	1 (100%)				1							
Big Horn	2 (40%)	3 (60%)	1		1	2				1		
Campbell	1 (50%)	1 (50%)	1							1		
Carbon	1 (33%)	2 (66%)		1				1	1			
Converse	1 (50%)	1 (50%)			1			1				
Crook		1 (100%)				1						
Fremont	3 (50%)	3 (50%)	1	1	1		1	2				
Goshen		1 (100%)		1								
Hot Springs	1 (100%)						1					
Johnson	1 (100%)		1									
Laramie	2 (33%)	4 (67%)	1	2		2					1	
Lincoln		1 (100%)						1				
Locums												
Natrona	4 (36%)	7 (64%)		2	4	1		1		3		
Niobrara												
Park	5 (100%)		2		3							
Platte	1 (100%)				1							
Sheridan	5 (100%)		4		1							
Sublette	1 (33%)	2 (67%)		1		1	1					
Sweetwater	2 (40%)	3 (60%)	2			3						
Teton	1 (33%)	2 (67%)				1	1	1				
Uinta	1 (100%)				1							
Washakie												
Weston		1 (100%)						1				

### Educational Background

Figure 44 displays the location of the high schools from which Wyoming PAs graduated: 21% of all PA respondents reported graduating from a Wyoming high school and 17% reported graduating from a high school in the Wyoming Area (i.e., a Wyoming border state)<sup>31</sup>.

**Figure 44: Physician Assistant High School Location N=109**

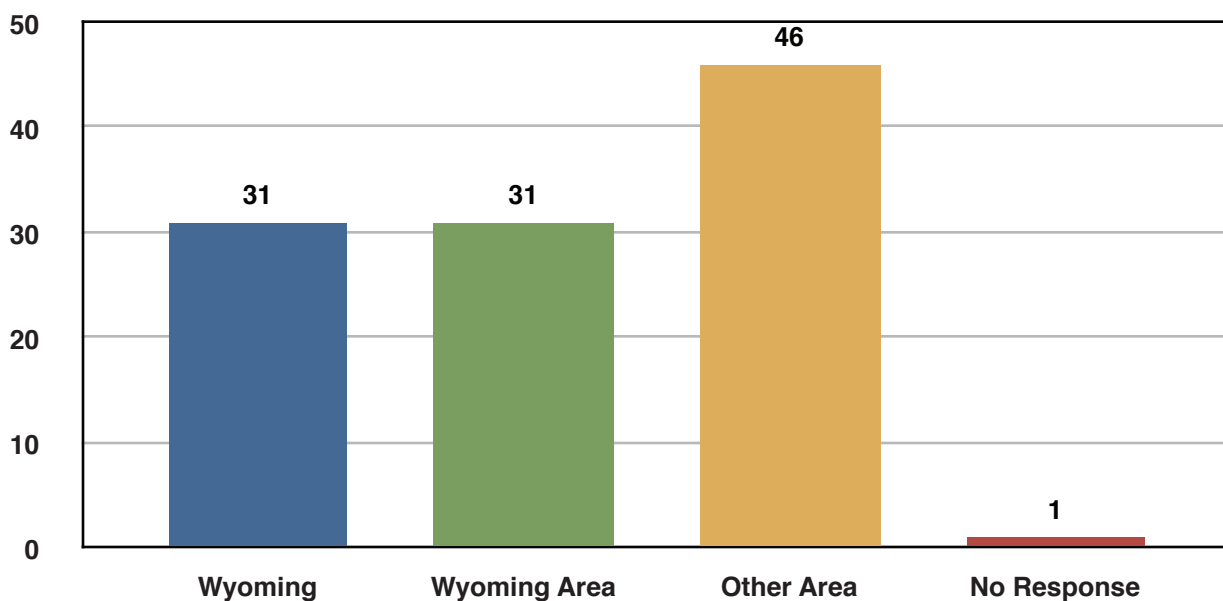


Table 23 shows the education of PAs by state. More PAs reported obtaining physician assistant training in North Dakota than any other state (14%), followed by Washington (11%), and Montana (10%).

<sup>31</sup> Wyoming Area includes Colorado, Idaho, Montana, Nebraska, South Dakota, and Utah.

**Table 23: Self-Reported PA Education by State N=109**

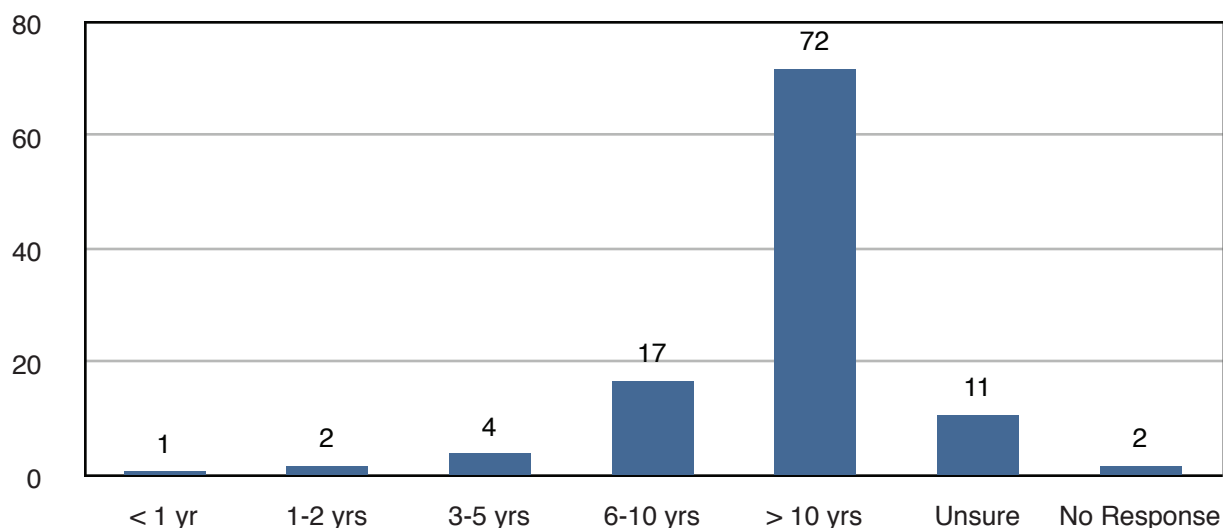
State	Total	Physician Assistant	Basic Nursing	Other	Post Graduate	Undergraduate
<b>Total</b>	285	132	8	1	25	119
Nebraska	36	12			12	12
Wyoming	31		3			28
Montana	29	13	1	1	3	11
Utah	22	12			3	7
North Dakota	2	18				2
Washington	18	14				4
California	12	4			1	7
New York	9	4			1	4
South Dakota	9	2			1	6
Texas	9	8				1
Arizona	8	4	1			3
Oklahoma	7	3	1			3
Idaho	6	3				3
Iowa	6	2			2	2
Ohio	6	3				3
Pennsylvania	6	5				1
Michigan	5	2				3
Missouri	5	3			1	1
Colorado	4	2				2
Kansas	4	1	1			2
District Of Columbia	3	2				1
Georgia	3	3				
Kentucky	3	3				
Illinois	2	1			1	
Indiana	2					2
Maryland	2	1				1
Minnesota	2	1				1
Nevada	2					2
Oregon	2	1				1
Tennessee	2	1	1			
West Virginia	2					2
Wisconsin	2	1				1
Alabama	1	1				
Connecticut	1	1				
New Hampshire	1					1
New Jersey	1					1
North Carolina	1	1				
Vermont	1					1



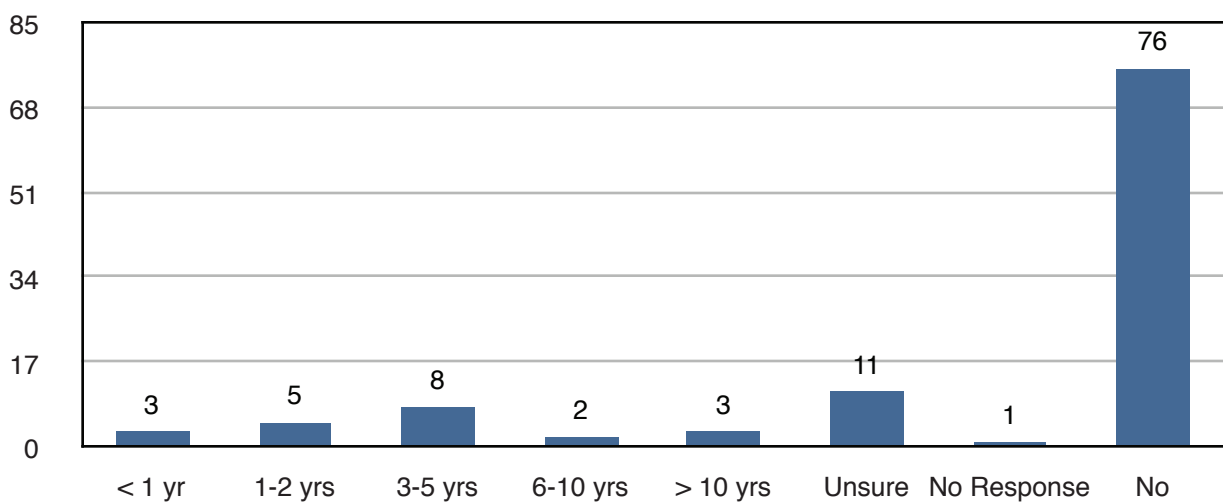
### Retirement/Relocation Timeframes

Figures 45 and 46 display PA respondents' retirement and relocation timeframes. The vast majority of PAs (66%) do not plan to retire in ten years or more, while only one plans to retire in the next year. In terms of plans for relocation, the majority of PAs (70%) responding to the survey have no plans to change practice within the next ten years.

**Figure 45: Physician Assistant Retirement Timeframes N=109**



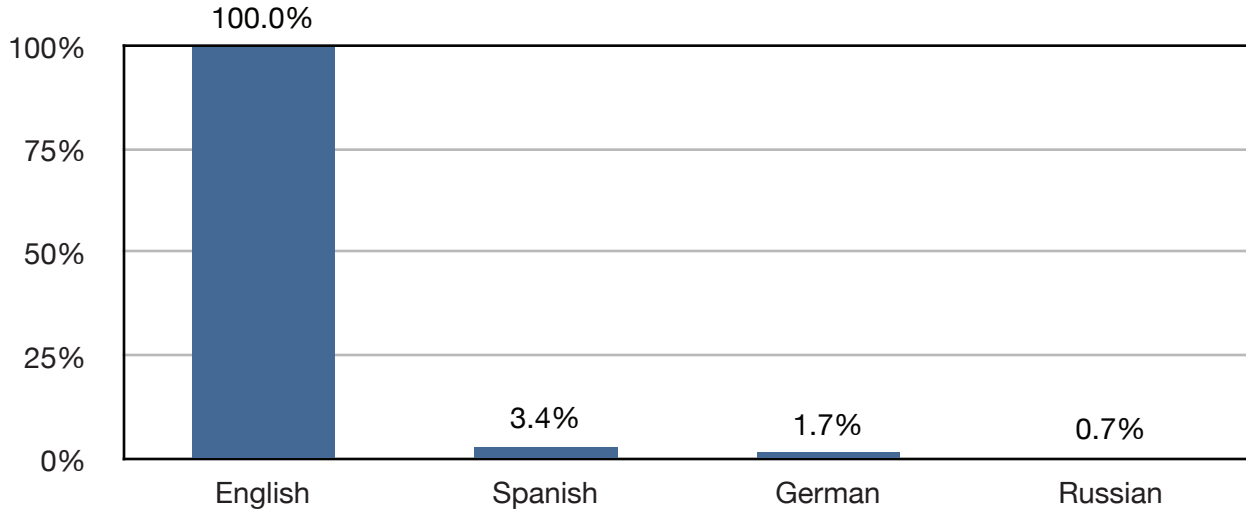
**Figure 46: Physician Assistant Relocation Timeframes N=109**



### Language Capabilities

All PAs practicing in Wyoming (100%) reported speaking English. Some PAs reported being bilingual. As shown in Figure 47, following English, 3.4% of PAs speak Spanish, 1.7% speak German, and 0.7% speak Russian.

**Figure 47: Physician Assistant Language Capabilities N=109**



### Openings

Table 24 details the number of PA openings (both replacement openings and expansion openings) self-reported by practice locations.

**Table 24: Physician Assistant Openings by County N=473**

County	Total	Replacement	Practice Expansion
<b>Total</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>32</b>
Albany			
Big Horn	3		3
Campbell	1	1	
Carbon			
Converse	1	1	
Crook			
Fremont	2	2	
Goshen	1		1
Hot Springs			
Johnson			
Laramie	7	2	5
Lincoln	1	1	
Natrona	9	4	5
Niobrara			
Park	9	1	8
Platte	1		1
Sheridan	3	1	2
Sublette	3	1	2
Sweetwater	4		4
Teton			
Uinta			
Washakie	1		1
Weston			
Locum Tenens			