

Absurd and easily refutable: Refuting Texas Watch's claims

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Way Above The Population Trend Line

[In-state Physicians per capita - Chart](#)

An opinion piece issued by Alex Winslow of Texas Watch entitled “Spin-doctoring by doctors” (Dec. 1) is making its way around the state. The op/ed makes the absurd and easily refutable claim that “growth in (the number of Texas) physicians tracks population increases.”

In 2003 Texas passed a series of medical lawsuit reforms. Since then the growth in in-state physicians has out-paced population growth by 84 percent.

According to the Texas State Data Center, the 2003 population was 22,118,509 and the 2011 population is 25,883,999. That is a net difference of 3,765,490, or 17 percent growth.

According to the Texas Medical Board, in-state physicians in May 2003 numbered 38,035 and in May 2011 in-state physicians numbered 49,976. That is a net difference of 11,941, or 31.3 percent growth.

It has been argued that the biggest driver of physician increases is population increase. This is true.

However, Texas' physician workforce has grown considerably faster than the state's population.

Had we merely stayed on the 2003 physicians per capita trend line and adjusted for population growth the state would have added 7,054 physicians.

Instead we added 11,941.

Otherwise stated, population growth may well account for 59 percent of the state's new physicians. The other 41 percent above the trend were produced by some other factor.

When one considers the dramatic increase in physician applications and new licenses issued since 2003, it is reasonable to assume that the “something else” is largely influenced by a more hospitable legal climate.

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