

Physician Requirements for the Croat Population in Bosnia and Herzegovina

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Aim. To examine the supply of physicians in the areas of Bosnia and Herzegovina with the Croat majority, and possible programs which could bring the physician to population ratio in line with the Republic of Croatia.

Methods. Description and analysis of the current physician to population ratios, and possible solutions to the existing shortages.

Results. The current physician to population ratio in the areas of Bosnia and Herzegovina with the Croat majority, 1:969, is well below the ratio found in the Republic of Croatia (1:467). These ratios exist inspite of a dramatic decline in the population during the recent war by 300,000 to the current level of 500,000. Physician supply in the areas discussed has declined, in part as a result of the war and the tenuous peace that currently exists. Although the attempts have been made to encourage physicians to return to Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as the efforts to train physicians specifically from that area, no program has so far produced the desired effect.

Conclusion. There is a significant physician shortage in the areas of Bosnia and Herzegovina with the Croat majority. Bboth short-term and long-term efforts will be required to solve the problem. The short-term efforts need to focus on retaining the existing physicians and on encouraging new ones to locate in the area, while the long-term efforts should focus on developing a stable supply of physicians for providing medical care in the area. A viable long-term effort is the establishment of a medical school in the area, with the University of Mostar as a possible site.

Key words: *Bosnia and Herzegovina; medical education; physician supply*

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