



Call responsibilities vary

Nationally, 69% of family physicians (FPs) indicated that they provided on-call services. On call was described as “time outside of regularly scheduled clinical activity during which you are available to patients.” As **Table 1** shows, the proportion of FPs providing on-call services varied significantly based on whether physicians served urban or rural patient populations. There is a statistically significant ($P < .05$) stepwise increase in the proportion of FPs providing on-call services as practices were located further from urban centres. Only 59.9% of FPs with inner-city populations provided on-call services compared with 88.2% of FPs with geographically isolated populations. **Table 2** shows the frequency and intensity of family physician on-call services by the primary patient population served.

Results are based on the 2004 National Physician Survey (NPS), a unique collaborative project of the College of Family Physicians of Canada, the Canadian Medical

Association, and the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada. Across Canada, 11 041 family physicians responded to the survey; national-level estimates are considered accurate within $\pm 0.9\%$, 19 times out of 20. Detailed national, provincial, and Territorial analyses of the 2004 NPS results are available on the NPS website at www.nationalphysiciansurvey.ca. The second iteration of the NPS is currently under way—all physicians, medical students, and second-year medical residents in Canada have recently been invited to participate. Results from the 2007 survey will be available in the fall of 2007.

If you would like the opportunity to develop and write a Fast Fact using the NPS results, please contact **Sarah Scott**, National Physician Survey and Janus Project Coordinator, College of Family Physicians of Canada; telephone 800 387-6197, extension 289; e-mail sks@cfpc.ca.

Table 1. Proportion of FPs providing on-call services by population served

ON-CALL SERVICES PROVIDED	SELF-DEFINED PRIMARY PATIENT POPULATION					NATIONAL TOTAL (N = 11 041) %
	INNER CITY (N = 1109) %	URBAN OR SUBURBAN (N = 5553) %	SMALL TOWN (N = 2029) %	RURAL (N = 1148) %	GEOGRAPHICALLY ISOLATED (N = 254) %	
Yes	59.9	67.1	78.4	81.8	88.2	69.1
No	34.2	28.7	17.8	13.9	9.1	25.6
Not stated	6.0	4.2	3.8	4.3	2.8	5.3
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100

Table 2. Frequency and intensity of family physician on-call services by population served

TYPES OF ON-CALL SERVICES	SELF-DEFINED PRIMARY PATIENT POPULATION					NATIONAL TOTAL (N = 7628) %*
	INNER CITY (N = 664) %	URBAN OR SUBURBAN (N = 3727) %	SMALL TOWN (N = 1590) %	RURAL (N = 939) %	GEOGRAPHICALLY ISOLATED (N = 224) %	
On call for at least 180 h/mo	18	17	26	27	33	21
Spending at least 40 h/mo providing direct patient care while on call	12	9	24	38	40	17
Seeing more than 45 patients/mo while on call	12	13	34	51	42	23

*Results are based upon the 69.1% of all family physicians who provided on-call services.