

How Many Primary Care Providers Does Manitoba Need?

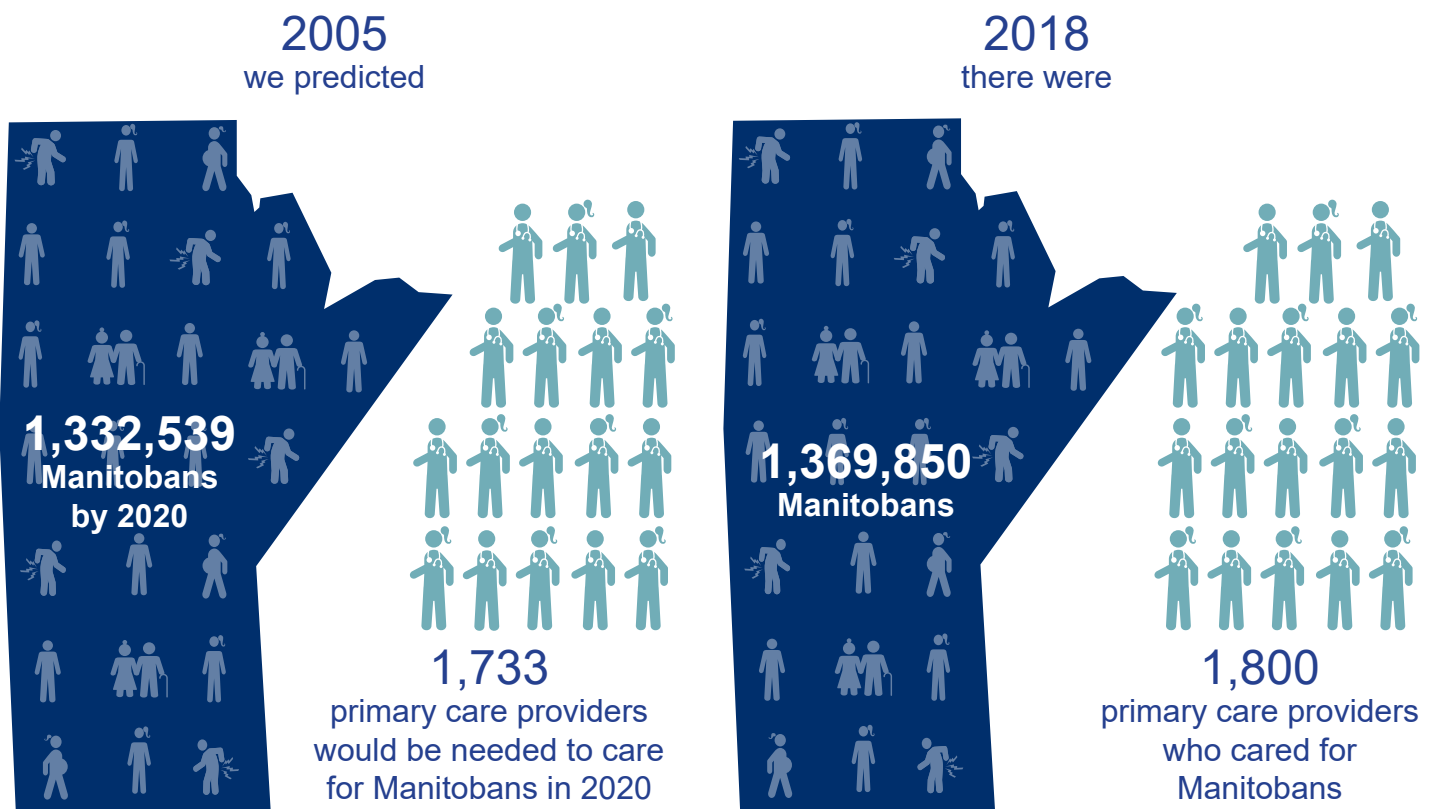
Primary care providers play an important role in keeping Manitobans healthy. Family doctors and nurse practitioners screen for, diagnose and treat illness, and refer patients to specialist doctors when other care is needed. People who see their primary care provider on a regular basis tend to have better overall health. That's why it's important to make sure there are enough primary care providers for all Manitobans.

In 2005, a study by the Manitoba Centre for Health Policy predicted how many primary care providers Manitoba would need over the next 15 years. We used a new method for these predictions – the predictions were based on data that showed how Manitobans used primary care in the past. The study also factored in how many patients each provider would be likely to care for and how the Manitoba population would change and grow over time.

How accurate is the prediction?

It's now 15 years later, and we can compare our predictions to what actually happened. When we compare the 2005 predictions to actual data on primary care use in 2018, we find that the models did an excellent job of predicting how Manitobans would use primary care.

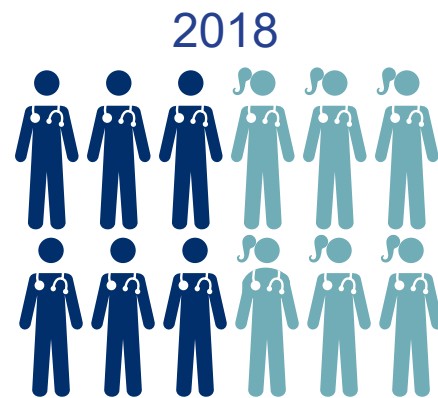
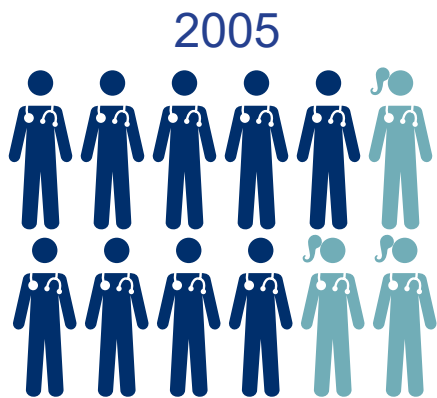
- The 2005 predictions of the primary care need are **within 2%** of what Manitobans actually used in 2018 – this is a remarkably close estimate.
- The predicted Manitoba population **looks very similar** to the actual 2018 population, although it grew a little faster than expected.



What's Changed?

Since 2005, **the way that family doctors and nurse practitioners provide care has changed.**

- There are now more female providers and more part-time providers than in 2005. This has an impact on how many providers are needed overall in Manitoba.
- Some providers are part of My Health Teams and work with other health care professionals (physiotherapists, dieticians, social workers, etc.) to deliver care in particular geographical regions of Manitoba. Determining the primary care needs of these individual regions aids health system planners in making sure all Manitobans get the care they need.



What's Next?

Now that we know our prediction models work well, we can use them to look at future primary care needs. The full report (link below) includes projections for primary care resources in Manitoba up to 2025.

However, we should be careful about assuming that past use of primary care will always reflect what Manitoba will need in the future. Measuring how many people saw their primary care provider doesn't necessarily tell us whether everyone who needed care was able to access it. This is an important limitation of the methods we used, and should be kept in mind as plans for future health care services are put in place.

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