

Primary Care Provider Shortage Trends in Alabama

The Alabama Office of Primary Care and Rural Health (AOPCRH) endeavors to improve access to health care services for all rural Alabamians through activities with specialized focus on children, the elderly, minorities, and other medically underserved vulnerable populations. However, despite its best efforts, primary care Health Provider Shortage Area (HPSA) Designation scores are trending upward, indicating increased provider shortages in Alabama.

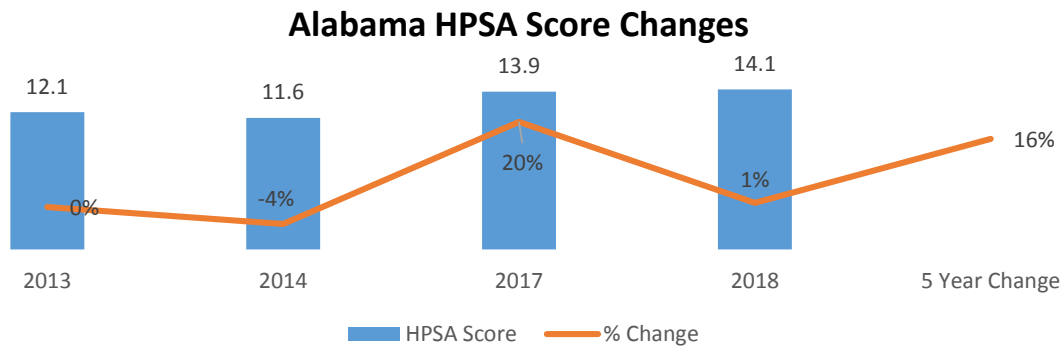


Figure 1. Between 2013 and 2018, the average HPSA score for all Alabama counties increased by 16%.

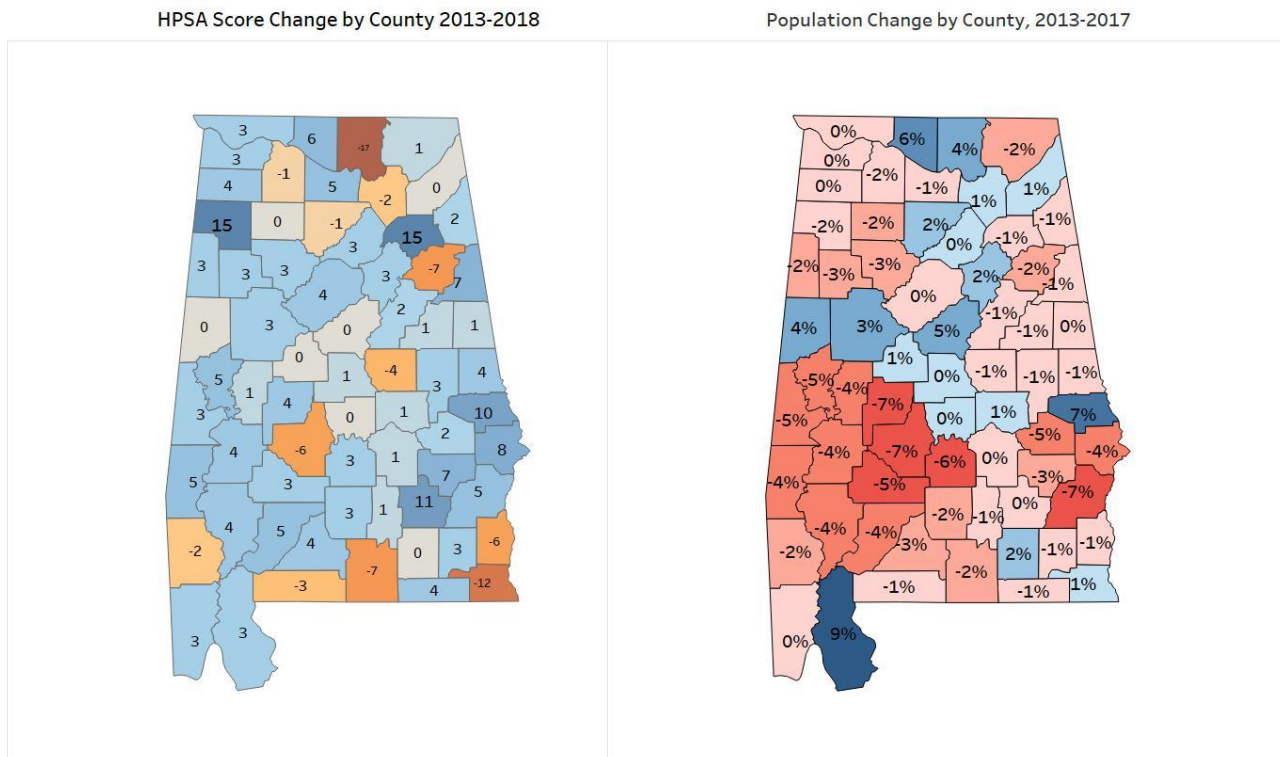


Figure 2. While some Alabama counties experienced little to no change in shortage designation status over the past five years, others experienced significant changes. Madison and Houston counties eliminated their provider shortages entirely. However, other counties, like Marion and Etowah, saw large increases in provider shortages. Population change appears to have had little effect on shortage designation scores. Further analysis is needed to determine the cause for the large fluctuations in shortage designation scores.