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### Orthopaedic Surgery Trends in Gender Diversity

**SAN DIEGO** (March 10, 2025)—Despite the rising number of female medical students, a new study presented at the 2025 Annual Meeting of the [American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons](#) (AAOS), revealed that the rate of female representation in orthopaedics has increased at a statistically significantly lower rate compared to other medical specialties. However, the [study](#) found that regions including the Pacific West and South Atlantic showed notable growth in the number of practicing female orthopaedic surgeons.

According to the American Association of Medical Colleges, the percentage of female orthopaedic residents has gradually increased from 0.6% in 1970 to 20.3% in 2023. While this study demonstrates a national increase in the percentage of female orthopaedic surgeons entering the workforce from 2018 to 2023, a trend that is anticipated to continue in the future, this growth remains slower compared to other surgical specialties. It also highlights the need for additional efforts to recruit female talent to orthopaedics.

The retrospective review used data from the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) database to examine the number of practicing female orthopaedic Medicare providers and patient caseloads. The number of practicing orthopaedic surgeons in the data set averaged 23,682 annually across the six-year period. The CMS data was also queried to identify surgical and non-surgical medical specialties including general surgery, obstetrics and gynecology, internal medicine and family medicine, urology and anesthesiology for comparison.

Highlights of the findings include:

- The mean percentage of female orthopaedic surgeons across all states was 6.02% in 2018 and demonstrated subsequent annual increases up to 7.51% in 2023, with an overall increase of 1.49% over the six-year period. This value was statistically significantly lower when compared to female growth in other surgical specialties such as general surgery (5.50%) and obstetrics and gynecology (6.93%).
- Percentages of female orthopaedic CMS providers also varied by state with a minimum of 0.0% in Alaska up to a maximum 16.5% for Hawaii in the 2023 data set. Analysis of geographical trends revealed a 14% and 23% increase respectively in female orthopaedic representation in the Pacific West and South Atlantic regions from 2018 to 2023. These regions demonstrated the highest growth rates for all female providers across the various surgical and non-surgical specialties included in the comparison.
- Caseload per orthopaedic CMS provider per state ranged from an average of 2,264 in 2018, to a peak of 2,424 in 2022.
- Limitations of the study highlight that information was restricted to CMS providers, which does not capture all orthopaedic surgeons practicing in the United States. However, this population represents a large proportion of orthopaedic surgeons. It presents a “worst-case” scenario as previous studies have speculated that gender disparity may be higher in orthopaedic arthroplasty specialists when compared to other orthopaedic subspecialties.

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[2025 AAOS Annual Meeting Disclosure Statement](#)

#### About the AAOS

With more than 39,000 members, the [American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons](#) is the world’s largest medical association of musculoskeletal specialists. The AAOS is the trusted leader in advancing musculoskeletal health. It provides the highest quality, most comprehensive education to help orthopaedic surgeons and allied health professionals at every career level best treat patients daily. AAOS is the source of information on bone and joint conditions, treatments, and related musculoskeletal healthcare issues; and it leads the healthcare discussion on advancing quality.

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