

27.2% Surge in Physician Practices — ALEX Intelligence 2026

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South Dakota leads U.S. growth since 2019 — ALEX Intelligence 2026

## THE DATA

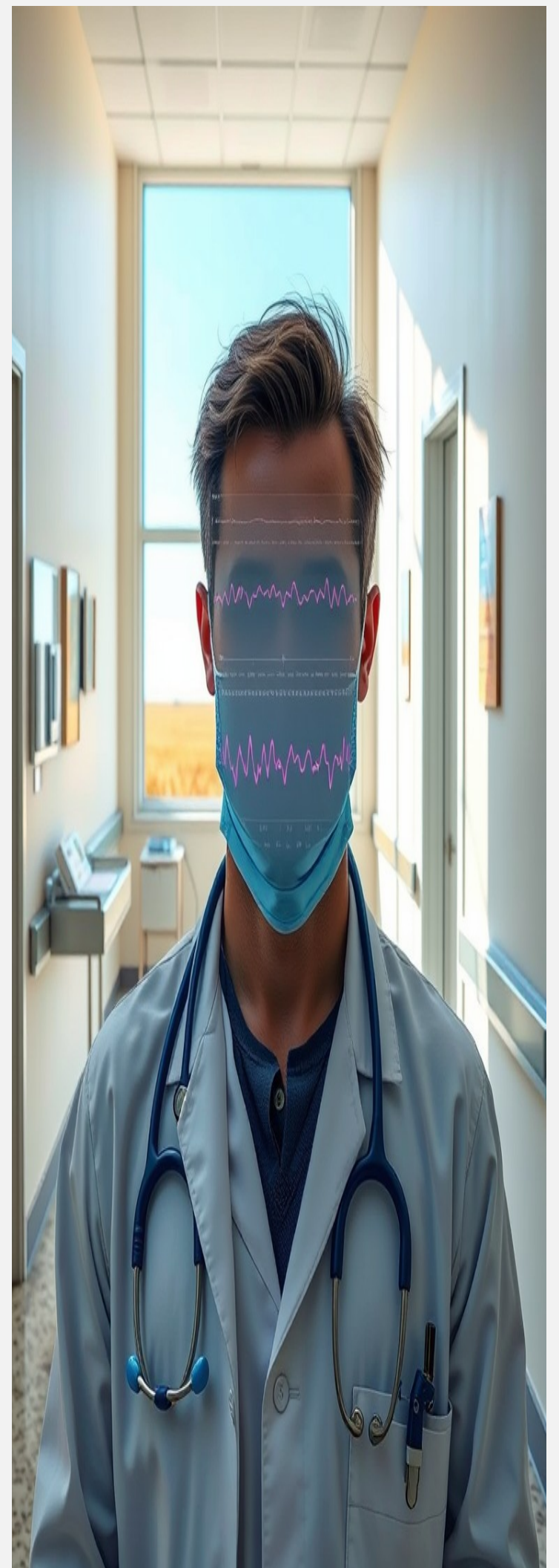
# 27.2%

### Change in Physician Practices Since 2019

South Dakota recorded the highest growth in physician practices among all U.S. states between 2019 and 2022.

This surge reflects a structural shift: rural and low-density states are outpacing urban centers in physician practice expansion. The trend suggests that AI-enabled telehealth infrastructure, decentralized care models, and lower regulatory friction are enabling rapid scaling outside traditional hubs. It challenges the assumption that healthcare innovation is confined to metropolitan corridors.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, County Business Patterns 2019 and 2022, NAICS 6211 (Offices of physicians) · ALEX Intelligence computation  
<https://alex-companies.com/data/2026-09-10-ai-healthcare-igrow-6211-state>



# 01

## Rural Expansion ≠ Lagging Innovation

South Dakota's 27.2% growth in physician practices since 2019 reveals that geographic decentralization does not equate to technological lag. Instead, it suggests that AI-driven care coordination tools, remote monitoring systems, and digital patient engagement platforms are enabling high-impact healthcare delivery in low-density regions. This is not a retreat from urban centers — it's a strategic realignment of care access via digital infrastructure.



# 02

## The AI-Driven Rural Advantage

Colorado, ranked 10th with a -2.3% change, shows that even states with strong urban healthcare ecosystems can face stagnation in practice growth. This contrast highlights a critical insight: AI is not just amplifying urban care — it's creating new economic incentives for rural expansion. The most productive AI healthcare deployments may not be in cities, but in regions where digital infrastructure can leapfrog physical limitations, making rural areas more attractive for physician retention and AI integration.

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