

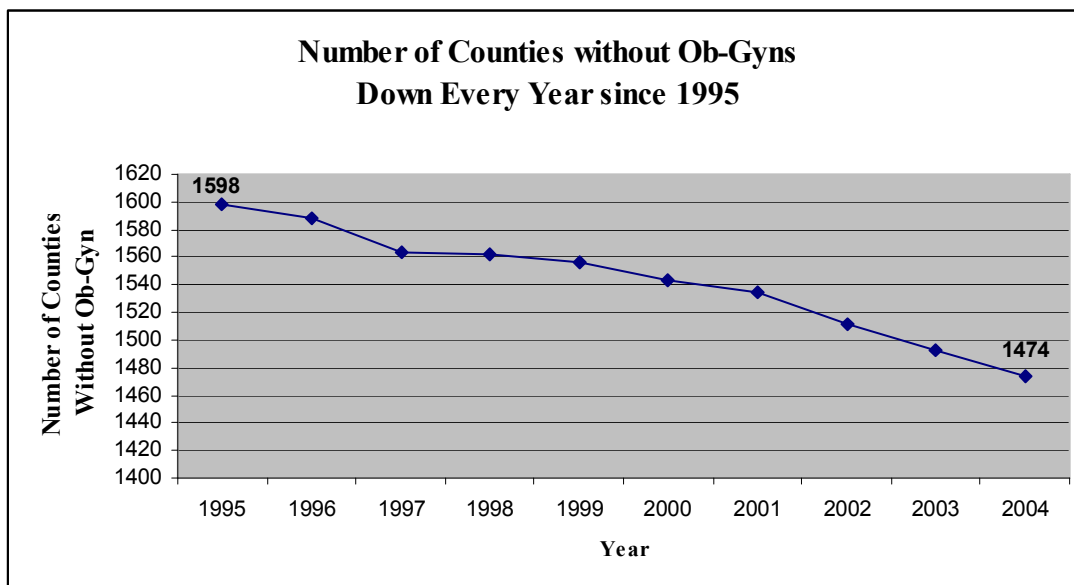


Auto Safety Group • Congress Watch • Energy Program • Global Trade Watch • Health Research Group • Litigation Group  
Joan Claybrook, President

## Bush Fear-Mongering on Ob-Gyn Access Belied by Facts

In his 2006 State of the Union address, President Bush told the nation that “because lawsuits are driving many good doctors out of practice – leaving women in nearly 1,500 American counties without a single ob-gyn – I ask the Congress to pass medical liability reform this year.”<sup>1</sup> While this statistic may frighten women, Bush is wrong on the facts. The truth is that fewer counties every year are left without ob-gyns.<sup>2</sup>

Bush and health care industry lobbyists make gloomy pronouncements suggesting that a “crisis” in medical malpractice litigation directly threatens women’s access to health care. But the number of licensed ob-gyns actually has been growing, and the number of live births per ob-gyn has decreased, according to data compiled by the American Medical Association and the U.S. Census Bureau.



Source: Area Resource File, U.S. Census Bureau

**Not every county can support a full-time ob-gyn**

Some counties simply do not have the patient base to support a full-time ob-gyn. “Ob-gyns per county” is a poor measure of access to quality health care. To illustrate, the following table presents demographics of five counties that do not have an ob-gyn located within their county lines.

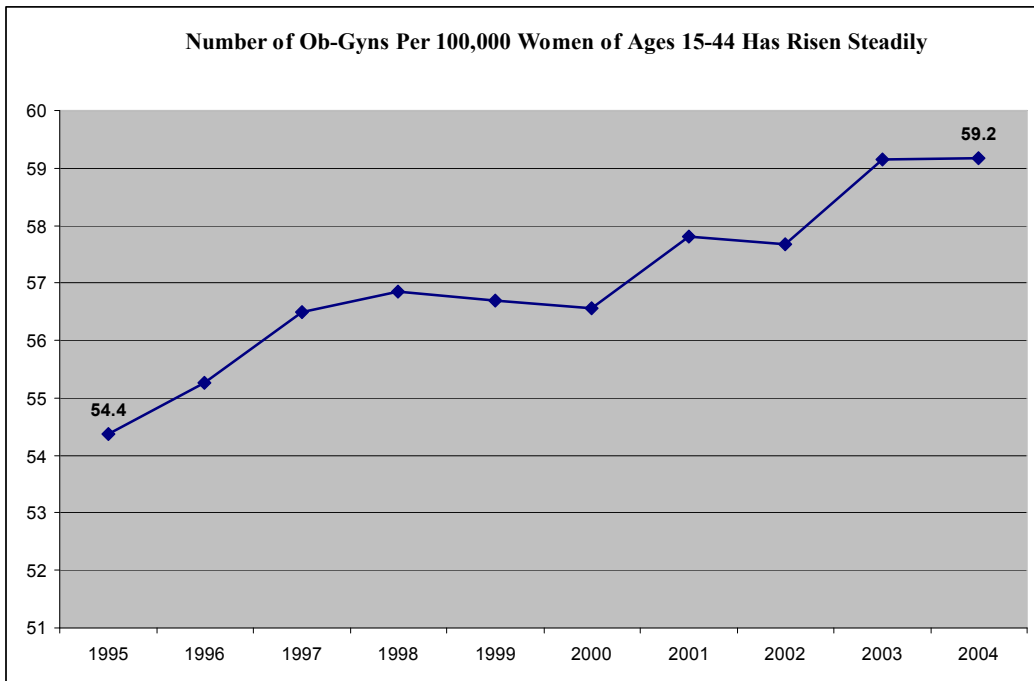
**Populations of Selected Counties that Lack Ob-Gyns**

| County           | Estimated Total Population (July 2004) | Estimated Population Growth (July 2000-July 2004) <sup>3</sup> | Population of Women of Child-Bearing Age <sup>4</sup> (2000) |
|------------------|--|--|--|
| King, Texas      | 321 <sup>5</sup>                       | -10.8%   | 73   |
| Arthur, Neb.     | 392 <sup>6</sup>                       | -11.5%   | 83   |
| Petroleum, Mont. | 499 <sup>7</sup>                       | 1.4%   | 79   |
| Slope, N.D.      | 727 <sup>8</sup>                       | -4.1%  | 127  |
| Hinsdale, Colo.  | 790 <sup>9</sup>                       | -0.6%  | 141  |

Source: U.S. Census, Table 1: Annual Estimates of the Population for Counties: April 1, 2000 to July 1, 2005

**Ratio of ob-gyns per women of child-bearing age is on the rise**

The number of ob-gyns per women of child-bearing age in the United States has grown significantly over the past decade. In 1995, there were 54.4 ob-gyns for every 100,000 women ages 15 to 44. By 2000, that number had increased to 56.6. The upward trend continues: In 2004, the ratio reached 59.2 ob-gyns per 100,000 women.<sup>10</sup>

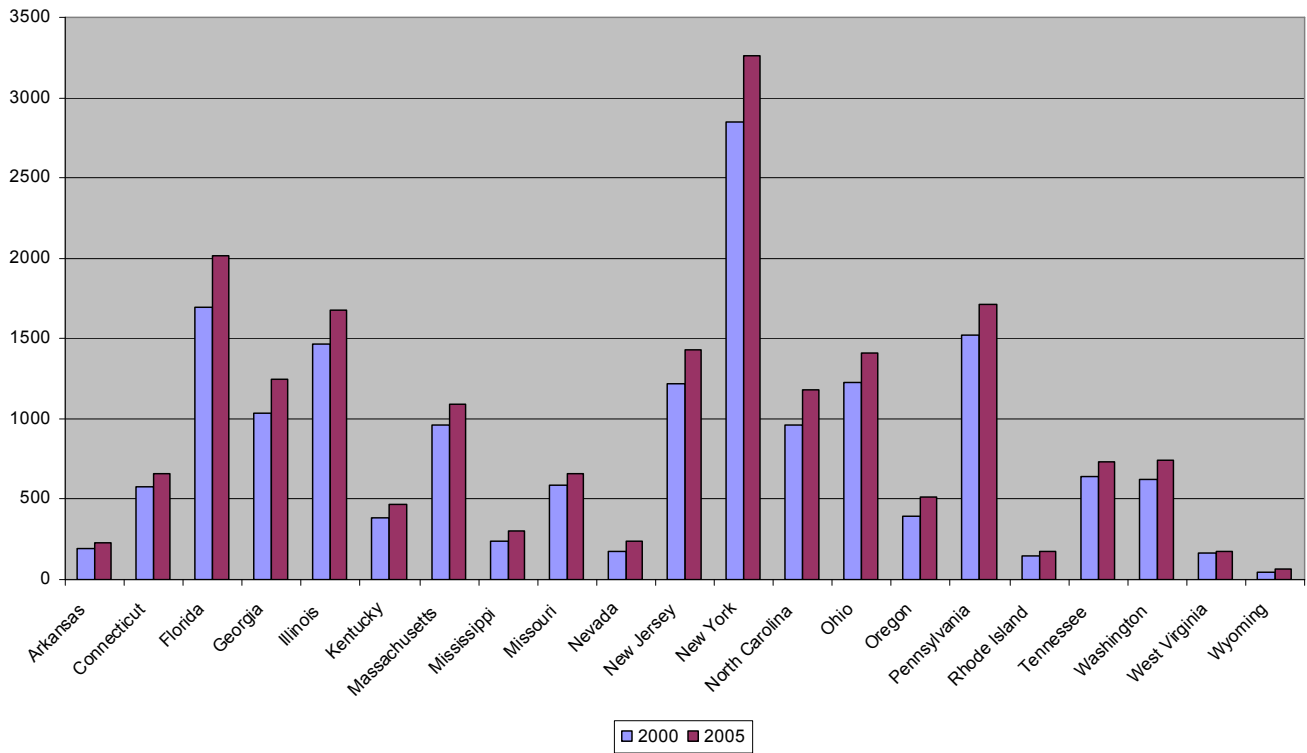


Source: U.S. Census Bureau

**The number of ob-gyns has increased even in each of the AMA’s designated “crisis states.”**

The increase in the number of ob-gyns has even occurred in each of those states the AMA has labeled as in a “medical liability crisis.”<sup>11</sup>

**Ob-Gyns Up: Number of Board Certified Ob-Gyns in So-Called AMA  
"Crisis States," 2000 and 2005**

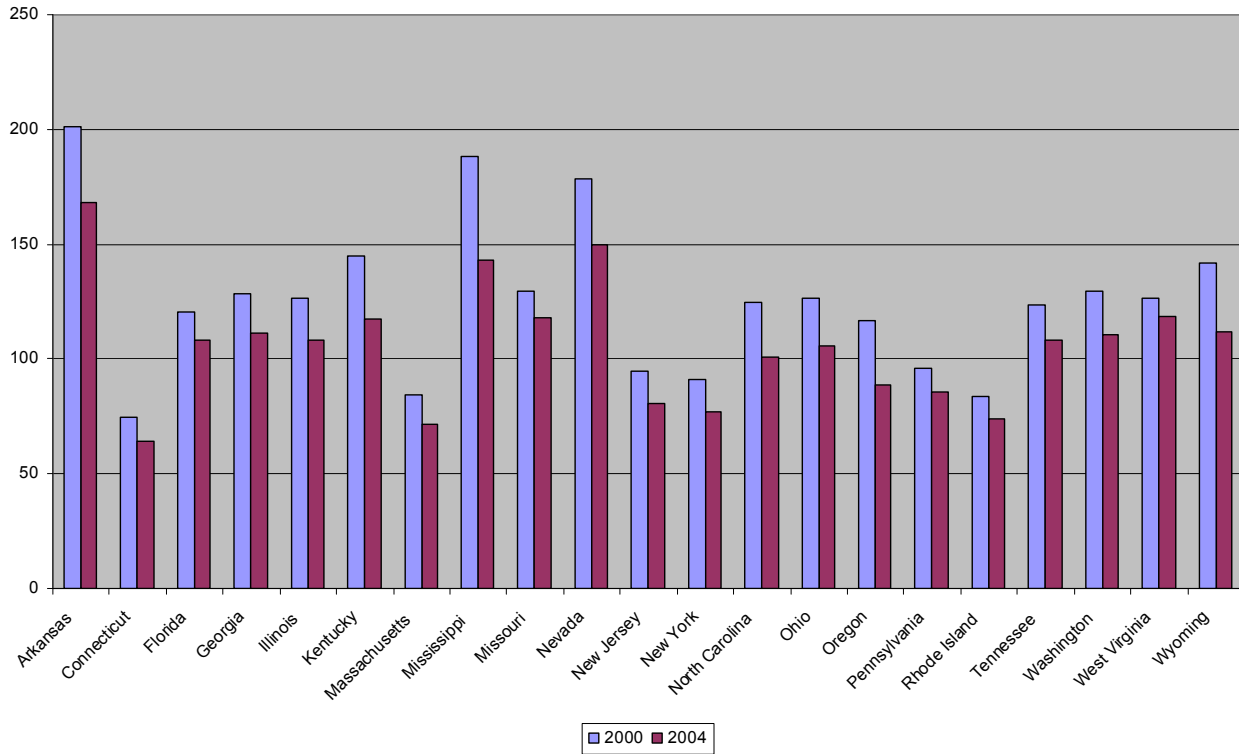


Source: American Medical Association

**The number of live births per ob-gyn is down in each state designated by the AMA as “in crisis.”**

As demonstrated above, the number of ob-gyns is growing. What has decreased is an ob-gyn’s workload. While the number of ob-gyns rose, the number of live births per ob-gyn in each so-called “crisis” state dropped substantially from 2000 to 2004.<sup>12</sup>

**Live Births Per Ob-Gyn Down Since 2000 In All So-Called AMA "Crisis" States**



Source: American Medical Association

**Endnotes**

<sup>1</sup> President Bush, State of the Union Address, Jan. 31, 2006.  
<sup>2</sup> “Area Resource File (ARF), 2005,” U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Health Resources and Services Administration, Bureau of Health Professions, Rockville, Md.  
<sup>3</sup> Calculated from U.S. Census, “Table 1: Annual Estimates of the Population for Counties: April 1, 2000 to July 1, 2005,” figures for each county, cited in detail below.  
<sup>4</sup> In order to capture the greatest number of women, this report defines “child-bearing age” as ages 15 to 44. Data was custom selected from U.S. Census, American Fact-Finder, downloaded on Jan. 18, 2007 (Available at <http://factfinder.census.gov/>)  
<sup>5</sup> U.S. Census, “Table 1: Annual Estimates of the Population for Counties: April 1, 2000 to July 1, 2005 (CO-EST2005-01-48).”  
<sup>6</sup> U.S. Census, “Table 1: Annual Estimates of the Population for Counties: April 1, 2000 to July 1, 2005 (CO-EST2005-01-31).”  
<sup>7</sup> U.S. Census, “Table 1: Annual Estimates of the Population for Counties: April 1, 2000 to July 1, 2005 (CO-EST2005-01-30).”  
<sup>8</sup> U.S. Census, “Table 1: Annual Estimates of the Population for Counties: April 1, 2000 to July 1, 2005 (CO-EST2005-01-38).”  
<sup>9</sup> U.S. Census, “Table 1: Annual Estimates of the Population for Counties: April 1, 2000 to July 1, 2005 (CO-EST2005-01-08).”  
<sup>10</sup> “Area Resource File (ARF), 2005,” U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Health Resources and Services Administration, Bureau of Health Professions, Rockville, Md.; U.S. Census, “Annual Estimates of the Population by Sex and Five-Year Age Groups for the United States: April 1, 2000 to July 1, 2005 (NC-EST2005-01).” Data extracted: Oct. 10, 2006; and U.S. Census, “Resident Population Estimates of the United States by Age and Sex: April 1, 1990 to July 1, 1999, with Short-Term Projection to November 1, 2000.” Data extracted Oct. 10, 2006. *Note on Methodology:* Census data from 2000 to 2004 were rounded to thousands to maintain consistency with 1990 to 1999 data.  
<sup>11</sup> AMA Medical Liability Crisis Map; Table 7 from 2001 and 2005, “Annual Reports of the American Board of Medical Specialties,” Tables 1 and 4 from Live Births for 2000; and 2004, National Vital Statistics Reports, Vol. 52, No. 19, May 10, 2004 and Vol. 54, No. 8, Dec. 29, 2005.  
<sup>12</sup> AMA Medical Liability Crisis Map; Table 7 from 2001 and 2005, “Annual Reports of the American Board of Medical Specialties,” Tables 1 and 4 from Live Births for 2000 and 2004, National Vital Statistics Reports, Vol. 52, No. 19, May 10, 2004 and Vol. 54, No. 8, Dec. 29, 2005.