

Mohs Micrographic Surgery in Louisiana

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Background: Mohs Micrographic Surgery (MMS) is a tissue-preserving surgical technique with high cure rates for a variety of skin cancers. Across the United States, the distribution of MMS surgeons correlates with population density. As a result, many rural populations have little to no access to MMS. Louisiana faces similar challenges because it is a predominantly rural state with significant disparities in healthcare access. This study evaluates Medicaid acceptance, geographic distribution and access to MMS across the state of Louisiana.

Methods: A cross-sectional descriptive analysis was performed to evaluate the geographic distribution of Mohs surgeons in Louisiana. Mohs surgeons were identified using the American College of Mohs Surgery (ACMS) and publicly available practice websites. Both fellowship-trained surgeons and surgeons certified in Micrographic Dermatologic Surgery (MDS) were included. To confirm Medicaid acceptance, each office was directly contacted to verify this information. Physicians were assigned to parishes according to their listed primary practice location. Parish populations were obtained using the U.S. Census Bureau. All 64 parishes in Louisiana were evaluated and compared.

Results: A total of 21 Mohs surgeons were identified in Louisiana with primary practice locations in 10 of the state's 64 parishes (15.6%), leaving 54 parishes (84.4%) without a primary Mohs surgeon. Based on the 2020 U.S. Census parish population estimates, approximately 2,024,160 residents live in parishes without direct access to a primary Mohs surgeon. Mohs surgeon density ranged from 0.41 to 1.59 per 100,000 residents among represented parishes, with a statewide density of 0.45 per 100,000. Jefferson Parish had the highest density (1.59), followed by St. Tammany (1.13) and Lafourche (1.03). 6 surgeons (28.6%) accept Medicaid, all of whom are in southeast Louisiana.

Conclusions: The findings of this study highlight significant disparities in access and distribution of MMS in Louisiana. The statewide density of Mohs surgeons is 0.45 per 100,000 residents, which is far less than the estimated United States density of 0.8 Mohs surgeons per 100,000 residents. Additionally, only 15.6% of parishes have a primary Mohs surgeon, leaving over 2 million residents without direct access to a Mohs surgeon. These findings demonstrate the need for solutions aimed at improving specialist distribution, recruiting more Mohs surgeons to Louisiana, and expanding access to this specialized surgical technique.

