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(Neb.)-Nebraska Confronting Rural Doctor Shortage

By: Dennis and Kathi Brown Posted at: 12/09/2012 07:35 AM

By GRANT SCHULTE

Associated Press

LINCOLN, Nebraska (AP) - A University of Nebraska Medical Center study has found that Nebraska lacks primary care doctors throughout the state, and the shortage is worse in rural areas.

The study comes as Nebraska lawmakers prepare for debate next session over whether to extend Medicaid coverage to more residents. Medical professionals say more people will seek medical care once they become insured, increasing the workload on doctors. Regardless, doctors say it's critical to extend coverage to keep people healthy and lower medical costs.

The study found Nebraska has 1,410 primary care physicians. One of the study's authors says the state will need 1,685 to meet the increased demand created by the federal health care law in 2014.

The study found that 11 of Nebraska's 93 counties do not have any primary care physicians.