

# SCAROP

Dec 3, 2021

Dr. Charles A. Pohl  
Chair, Group on Student Affairs (GSA)  
Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC)  
655 K Street, NW, Suite 100  
Washington, DC, 20001

Dear Dr. Pohl,

On behalf of the Society for Chairs of Academic Radiation Oncology Programs (SCAROP), I write to you with our collective concerns regarding misinformation about the field of Radiation Oncology that permeates the medical student community. We raise this issue with you as the leader of the Dean of Student Affairs within AAMC because you play a critical role in helping medical students decide on their future careers.

In recent years numerous aggressive, and in many cases anonymous, [online threads on Student Doctor Network \(SDN\)](#) and REDDIT have spread misinformation about the realities of working in, and the future of, our specialty. This has eroded enthusiasm about radiation oncology as a career, leading to a significant reduction in the applicant pool and unfilled residency positions over the last three years. Specifically, the negative conversations revolve around the expansion of residency spots during the past 15 years that many feel don't match the needs of health centers, doubts about the likelihood of obtaining good jobs in desirable markets post-residency, and the impending demise of the specialty as treatment courses for some disease sites become shorter.

Much of the information on these social media platforms is inaccurate and counter arguments are met with voracious responses and in some cases, personal attacks. We seek your help as the leader of Deans of Student Affairs to create more educational opportunities about radiation oncology for students. The American Society for Radiation Oncology (ASTRO) enhanced their [medical student resources](#) on their website to provide more balanced information including interviews with practicing radiation oncologists, first-person stories from residents, journal articles and more. They also launched a [Mentor Match](#) program to connect medical students with radiation oncologists to answers questions and support them in their career journey. We hope that you can help direct medical students to these resources so they can make informed choices.

On the job availability issue, in October of this year, SCAROP leaders conducted a rapid survey of academic chairs with a 45% response rate (49 respondents). This quick snapshot identified that academic programs alone had enough openings for each graduating resident to continue their career in the academic setting. Further, 86% of respondents anticipated having additional entry-level positions in the ensuing two to three years. Lastly, a recent resident survey demonstrated a high job satisfaction rate in excess of 91% for first year graduates in our specialty. (See attached)

Radiation oncology is one of the three pillars of oncologic specialties that manage cancer treatments, alongside surgical and medical oncology. As a clinical and highly technical cancer treatment specialty, we are privileged to be able to manage multi-faceted aspects of cancer and mitigate the adverse impact of

cancer on patients, both physically and mentally. Radiation oncologists work with some of the most sophisticated and complex technologies in all of medicine, and we are rewarded by the fact that our treatment modality effectively cures many types of cancer.

As people live longer, incidence of cancer will continue to rise by ~2-3% each year. In addition, there are novel and exciting approaches and combined modalities in managing treatments for our cancer patients. Radiation oncology is a highly efficient and cost-effective specialty, which will always remain a valuable therapeutic modality.

We bring this important issue to your attention and ask that you share the need for balanced and accurate information about the specialty with leaders from all medical schools. We all share a common goal and responsibility of preparing the next generation of physicians to serve the cancer patients of tomorrow. We know that radiation oncology will continue to play a vital role in cancer care for many decades to come, and we welcome all interested medical students to explore and enter our field. As department chairs in academic departments, we are committed to a learning environment that ensures professional growth, well-being, inclusivity, and compassion for our residents.

Thank you for considering our request. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact myself, any member of our [SCAROP Executive Committee](#), or Dr. Adam Dicker, Chair of Thomas Jefferson University's Department of Radiation Oncology.

Sincerely,



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**Fei-Fei Liu, MD FRCPC FASTRO**  
**Chair, Society for Chairs of Academic Radiation Oncology Programs (SCAROP)**

cc: Adam Dicker, Chair Professor and Chairman, Department of Radiation Oncology, Sidney Kimmel Medical College at Thomas Jefferson University

Attachment

SCAROP

# Academic Job Market Snapshot

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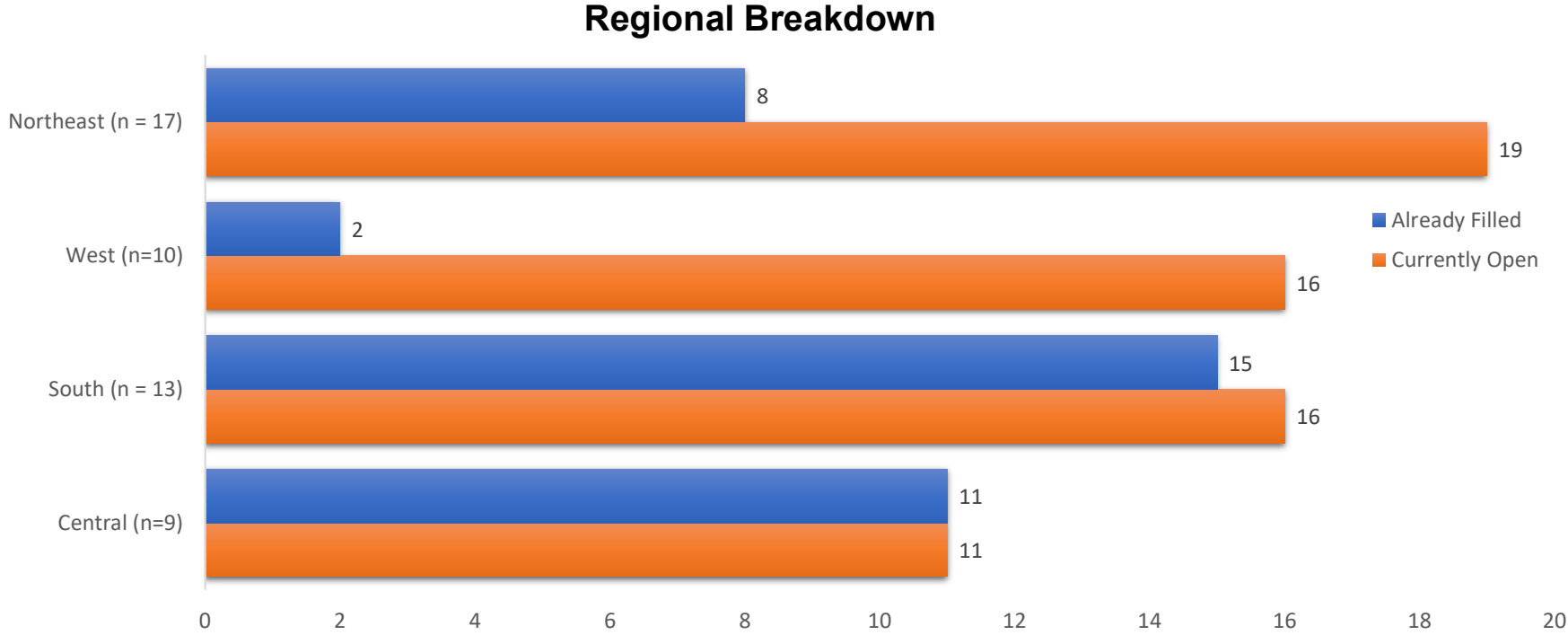
# About the Survey

- The objective of the survey was to help the SCAROP Leadership to better understand the current job market landscape in the academic field
- Survey was live from Oct 12 through Oct 19
- The survey was emailed to 110 SCAROP members. 49 of them responded to the survey - response rate of 44.5%
- Survey participant were requested to consider ALL locations to which they provide physician services when responding to the survey

Response Breakdown by Region	Response (n = 49)
Central	18% (n=9)
Northeast	35% (n=17)
South	27% (n=13)
West	20% (n=10)

# Number of Positions Already Been Filled vs. Positions Currently Open for the July 2022 Start Date

- As of October 01, 2021, 36 positions have already been filled and 62 positions are currently open - mainly in the West and Northeast regions

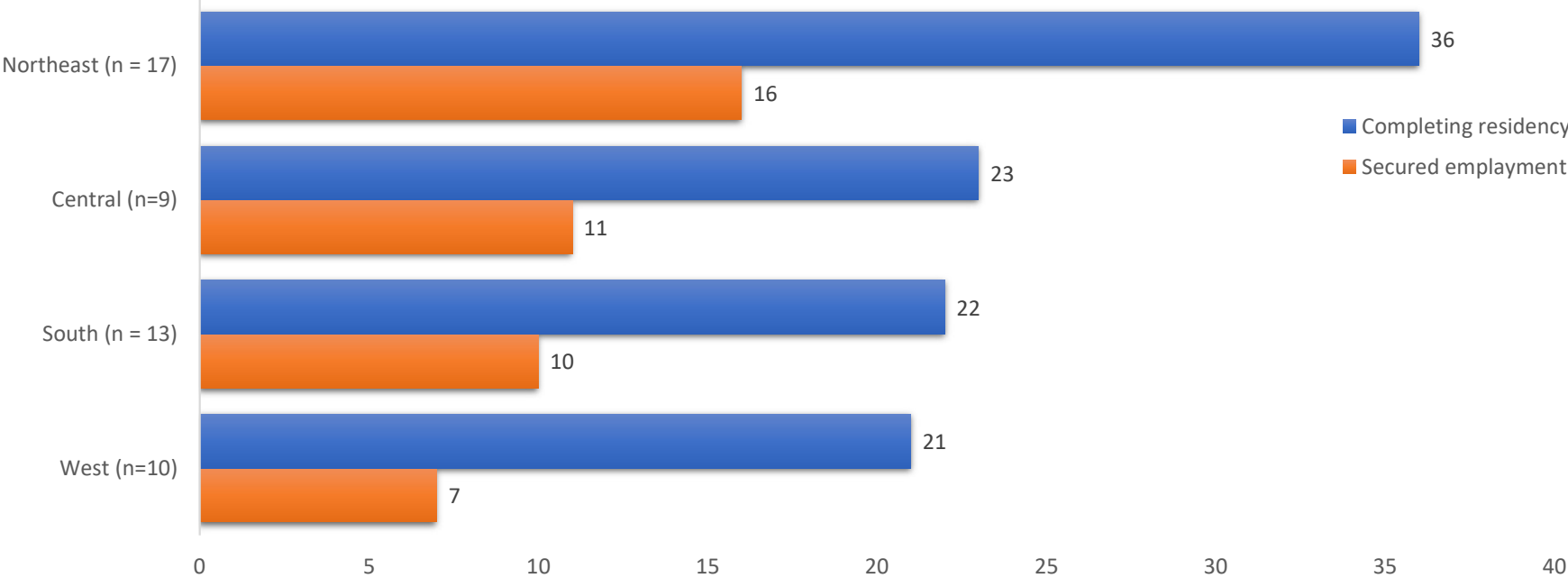


Q1: Please indicate the number of open positions that have been filled at your institution and the number of positions currently open for the July 2022 start date.

# Number of Residents Completing Residency Training in 2022 vs. Secured Employment for July 2022

- Out of 102 residents completing their residency training in 2022, 44 (or 43%) of them have already secured employment for July 2022

Regional Breakdown



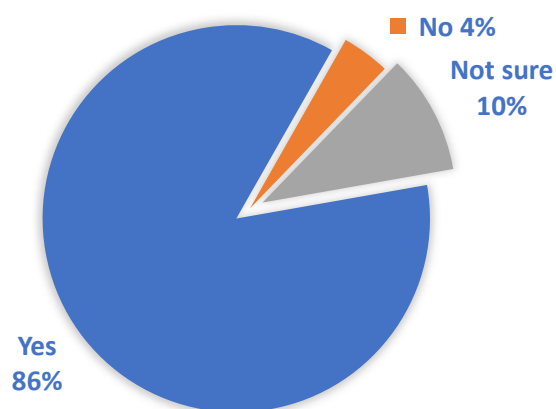
Q2: As of Oct 01, 2021, how many residents will be completing residency training from your institution in 2022?

Q3: Of those residents completing residency training from your institution in 2022, how many have already secured employment for July 2022?

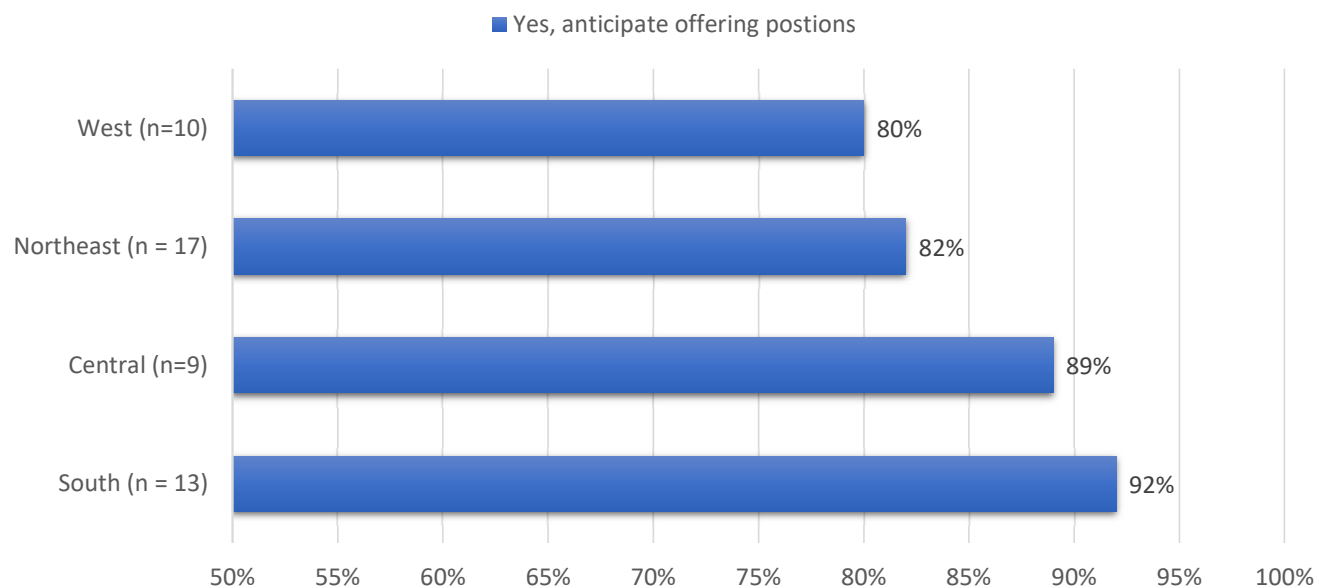
# Anticipate Offering Entry-level Positions

- 86% of participants anticipate offering entry-level positions for graduating residents in the next 2-3 years
- Institutions in the Central and South regions anticipate more hiring compared to other regions

Overall



Regional Breakdown



Q4: Do you anticipate offering entry-level positions for graduating residents in the coming 2-3 years?

# Respondents States by Region

- Overall, 49 members from 25 states and District of Columbia responded to the survey

Central	Response (n = 9)
IA	1
IL	2
MI	2
OH	3
WI	1

West	Response (n = 10)
AZ	1
CA	4
CO	1
NM	1
OR	1
UT	1
WA	1

South	Response (n = 13)
AR	1
FL	1
GA	1
KY	2
NC	2
SC	1
TN	3
TX	2

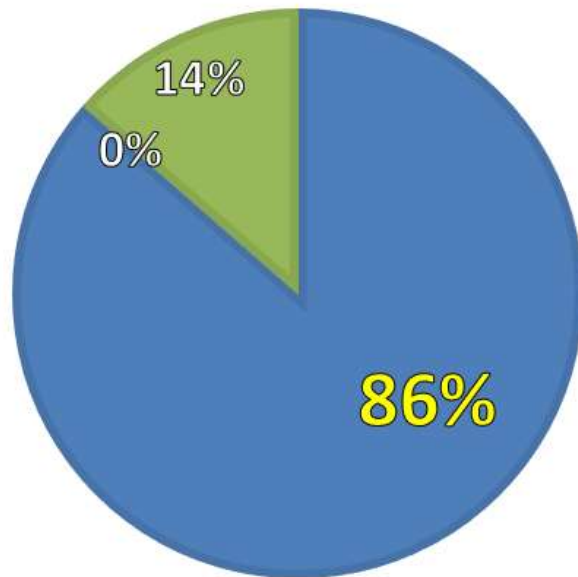
Northeast	Response (n = 17)
DC	1
MA	3
MD	2
NJ	2
NY	6
PA	3



# Graduating Resident Survey Responses

- 5/11/2021-7/15/2021
- 166 of 192 surveyed residents completed the survey

■ Complete ■ Partial ■ Not Done



Demographics		N	%
<b>Gender</b>		<b>166</b>	
	Female	46	28%
	Male	120	72%
	Transgender	0	0%
	Non-Binary/Non-Conforming	0	0%
	Not Listed	0	0%
<b>Race</b>		<b>151</b>	
	American Indian or Alaska Native	0	0%
	Asian	38	25%
	Black or African American	4	3%
	Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	0	0%
	White	101	67%
	Middle Eastern American	4	3%
	Not Listed	4	3%
<b>Ethnicity</b>		<b>159</b>	
	Hispanic/Latino/Spanish Origin	5	3%
	Not of Hispanic/Latino/Spanish Origin	154	97%

# Satisfaction Domains

