



UBC CENTRE FOR
HEALTH SERVICES AND
POLICY RESEARCH

Where Have All the Doctors Gone?

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THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA



CIHR IRSC

“Everyone knows” that Canada needs more doctors...

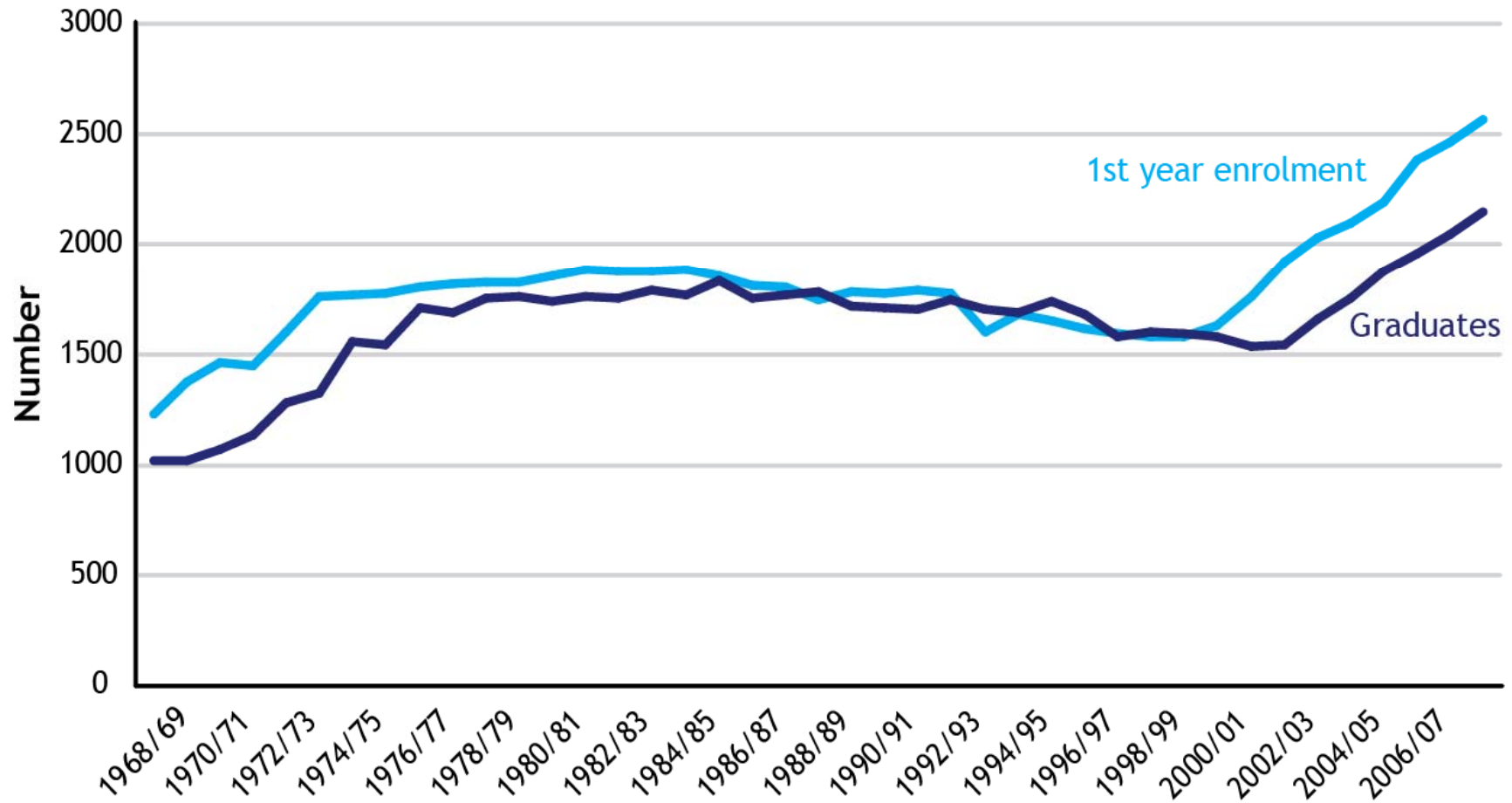
“...[A] vast wave of physicians nears retirement, worsening an already serious doctor shortage.”

Jeffrey Turnbull, Nominee for President-Elect,
Canadian Medical Association
The Ottawa Citizen. March 3, 2009

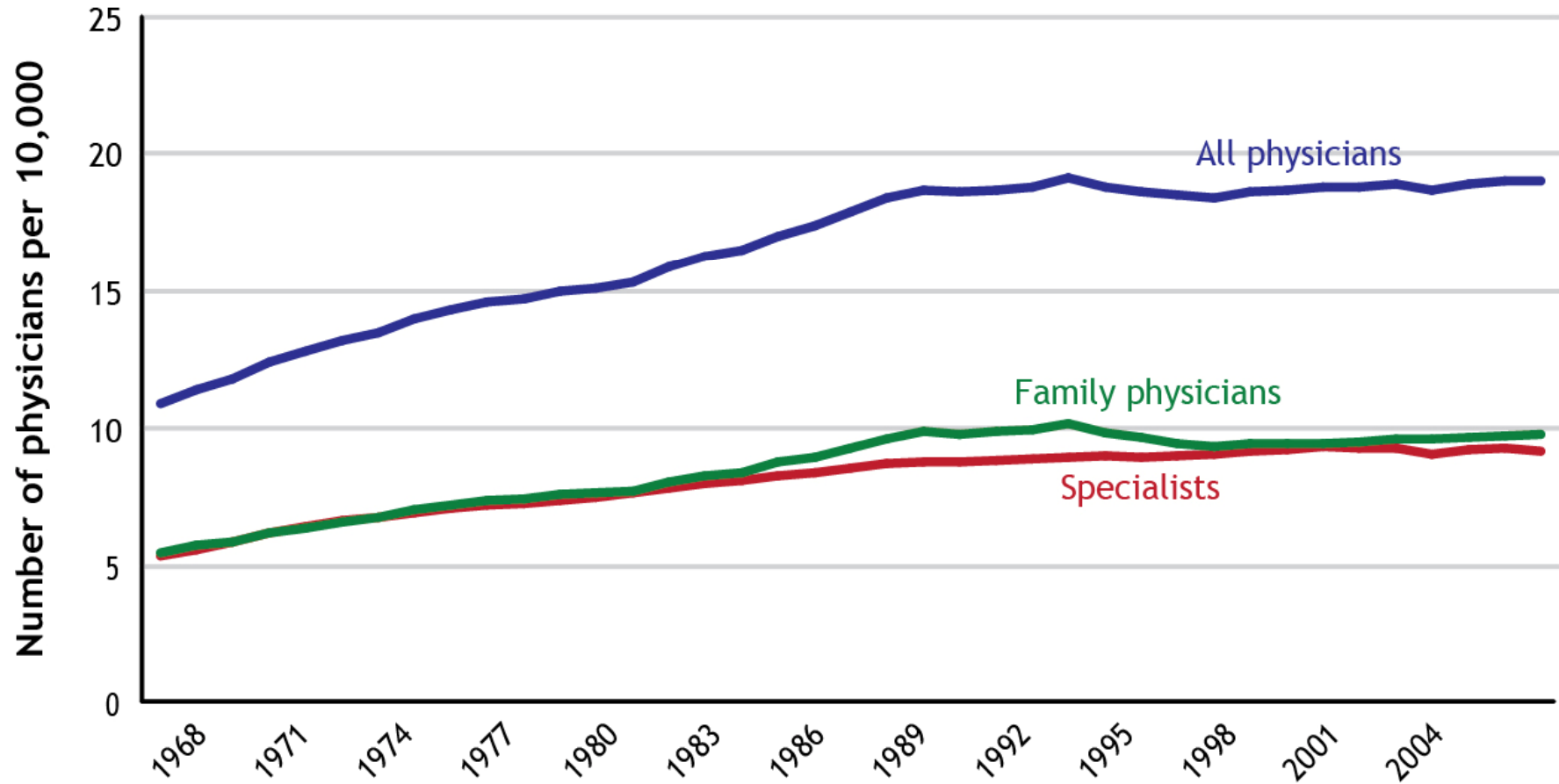
What might constitute reliable evidence of a shortage?

- Declining incoming supply - # new graduates?
- Declining per capita supply?
- Surveys/billing patterns showing physicians working less?
- Declining in physician services or payments?

Canadian Medical School Enrolment and Graduates, 1968-2008



Physicians per 10,000 Population, 1968-2008

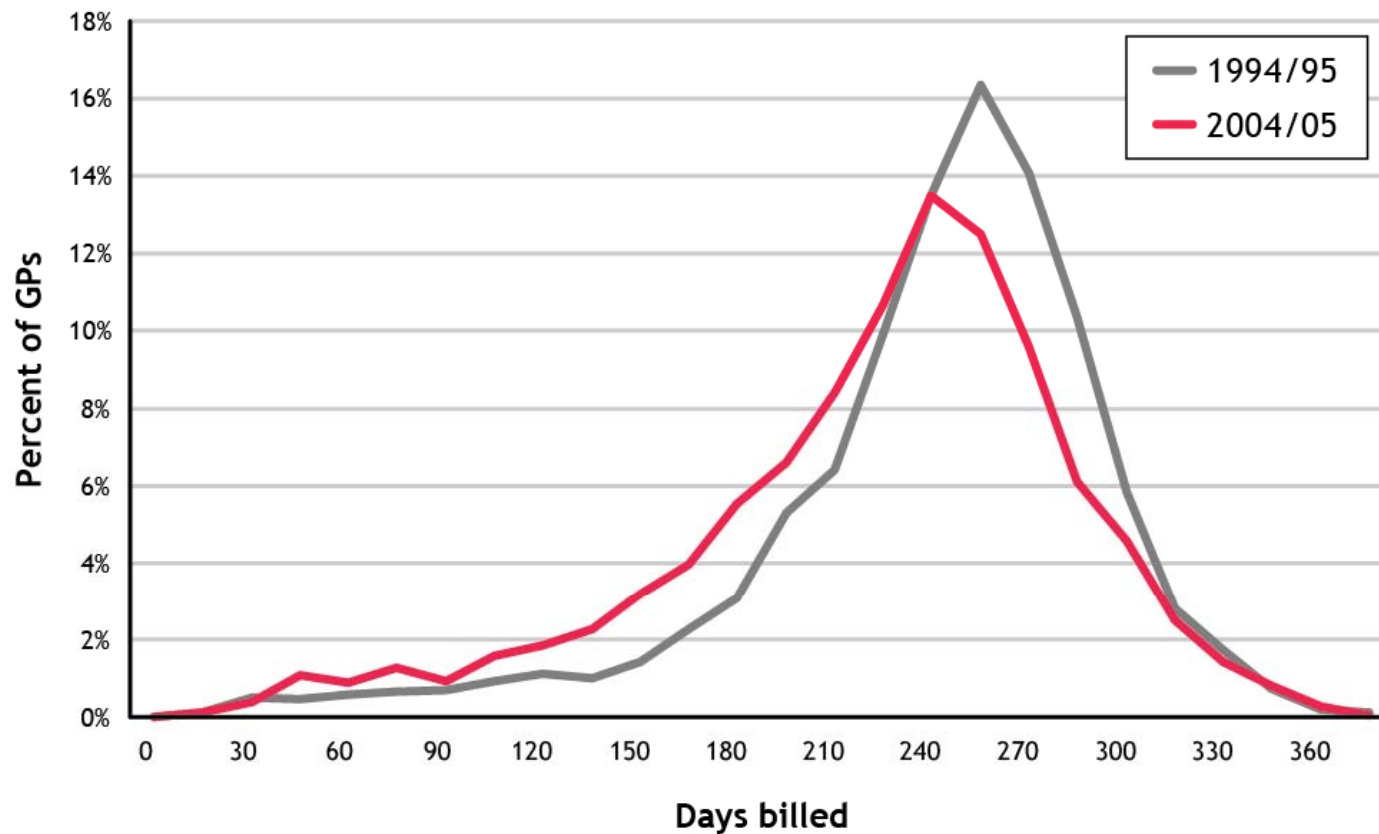


Some evidence that doctors are working less

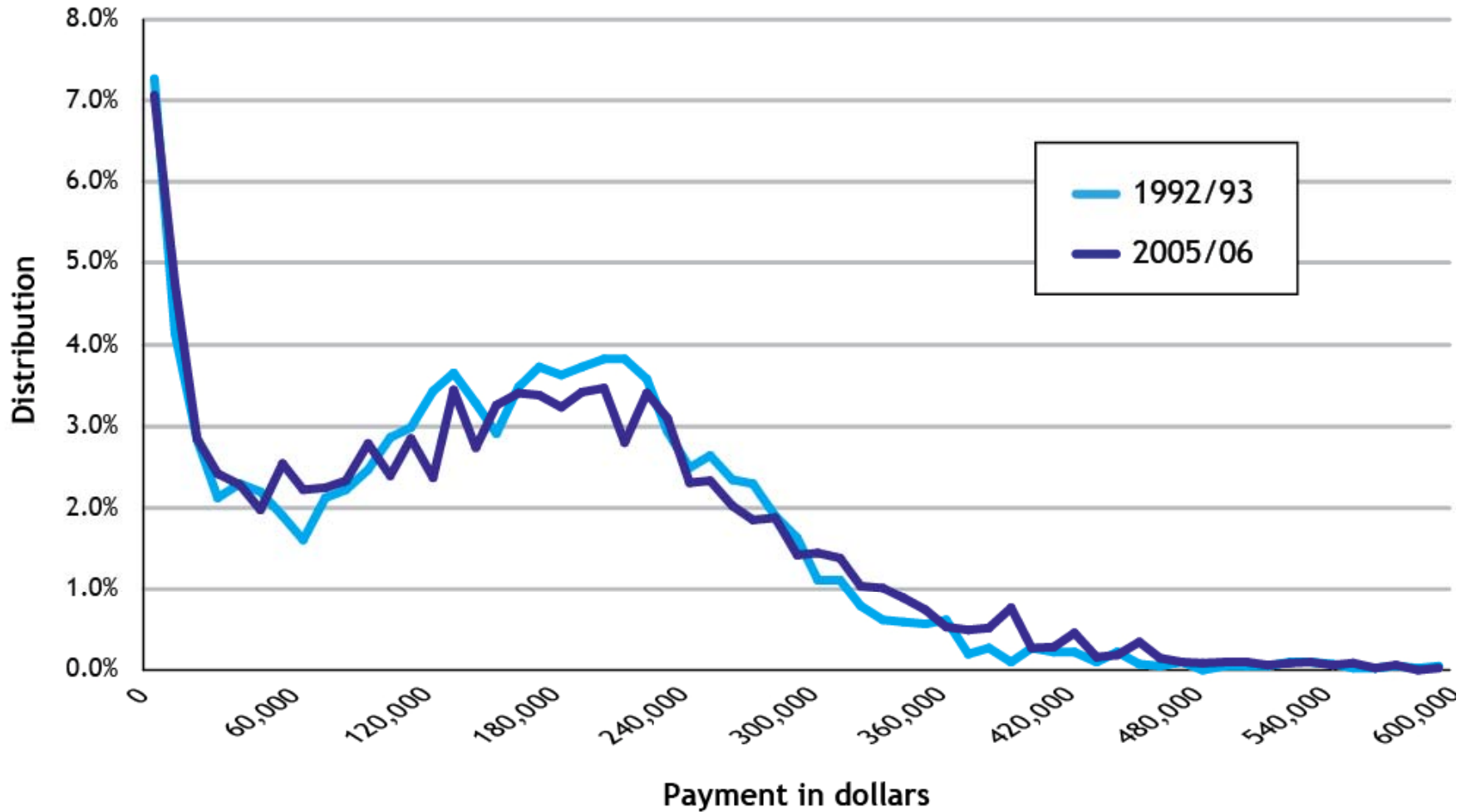
Decline in Self-Reported Weekly Hours of Clinical Work, Canadian GP/FPs

- Watson et al. (1993-2003) - 8.5%
- Crossley et al. (1982-2003) - 15.6%

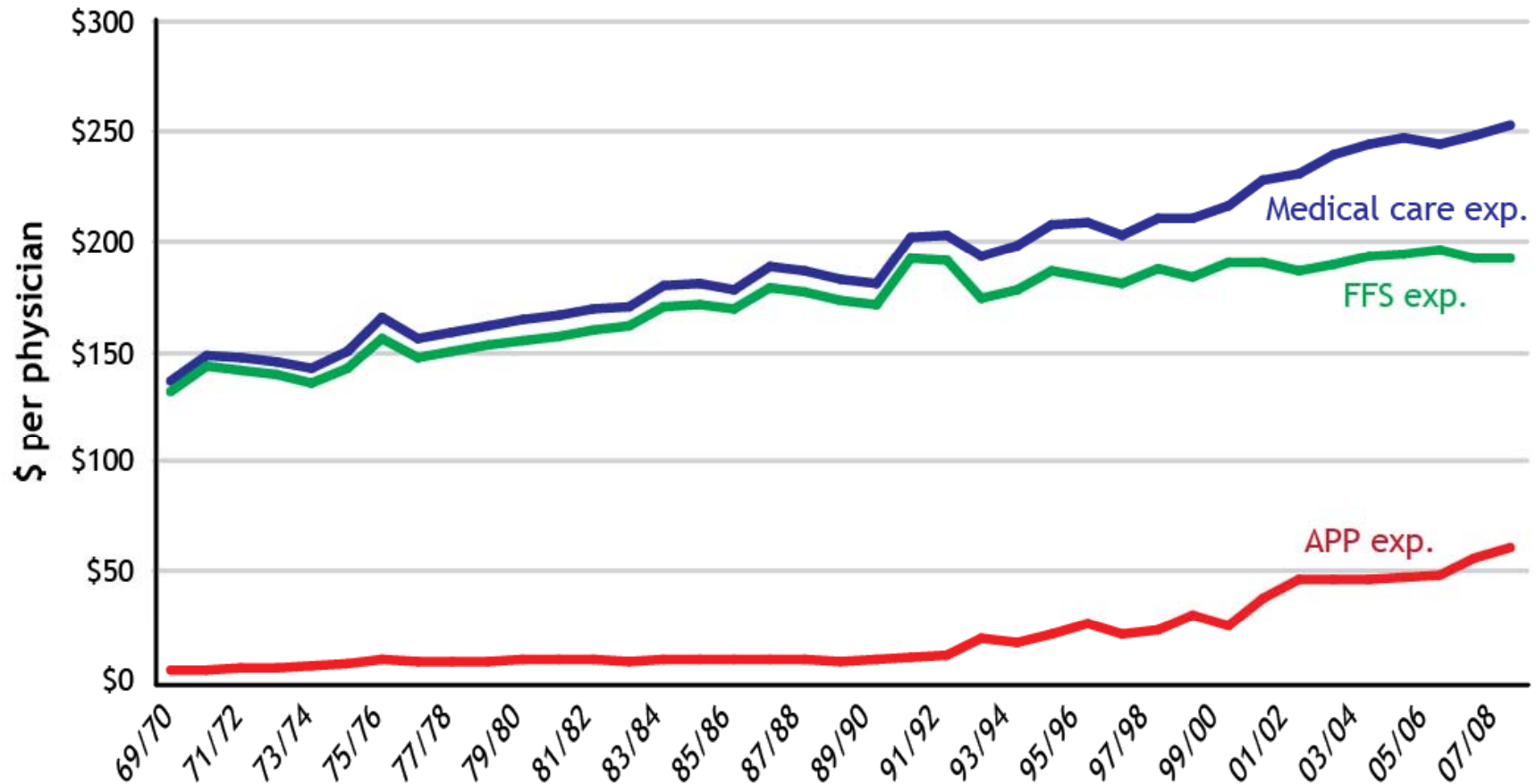
Distribution of total days billed by GPs who billed at least once in each month (billing minimum \$50 per day), 1994/95 and 2004/05



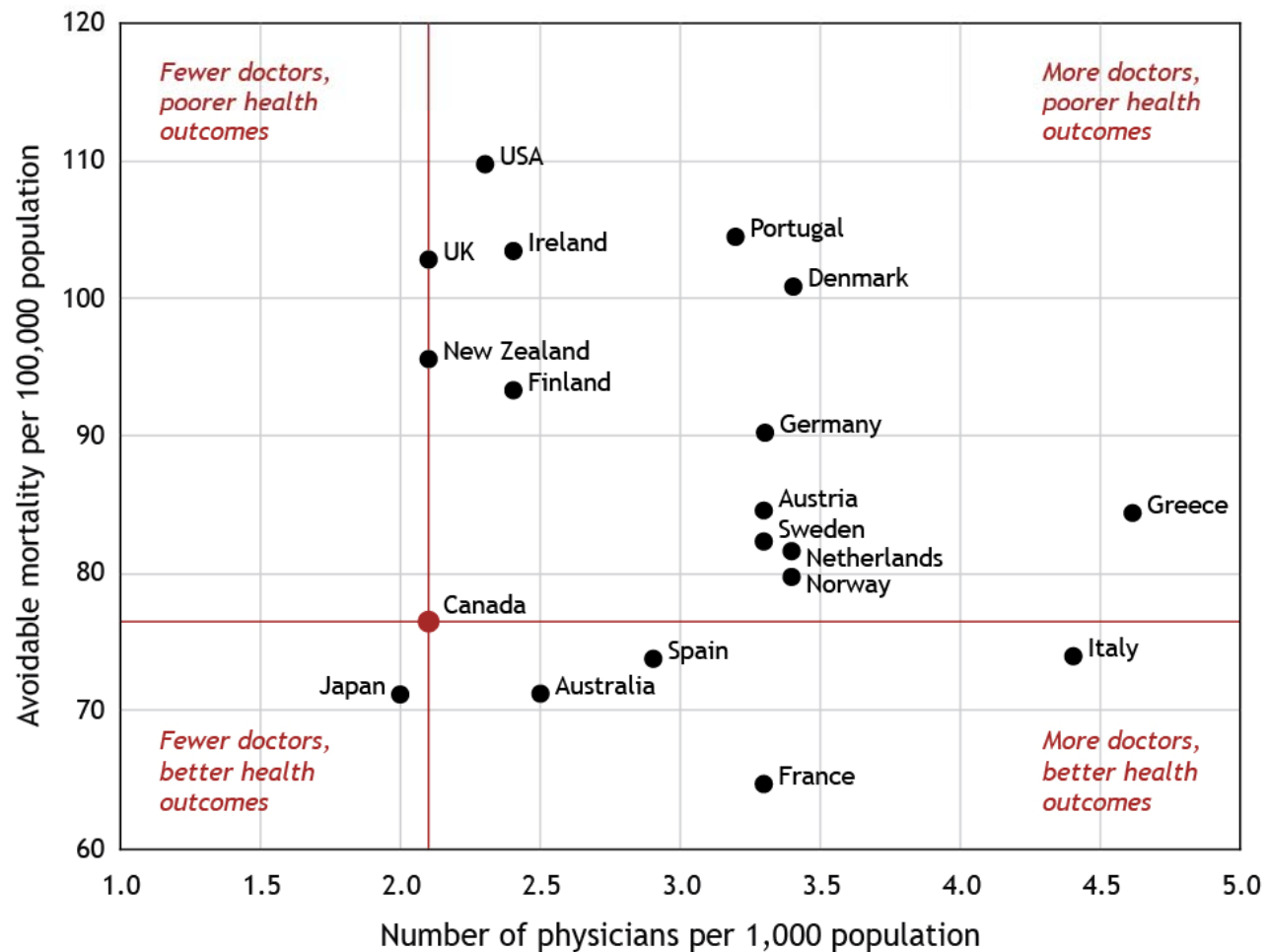
Distribution of total payments to GPs, 2005/06 dollars (fee adjusted)



Expenditures per Physician in BC, Total and Components, 1969/70 to 2007/08 (in 1991/92 dollars, fee adjusted)



Avoidable mortality by physicians per 1,000 population



But Why Does the CMA Want More Doctors?

“At CMA, defending and promoting the interests of Canada’s doctors is central to our mission. Advancing the medical community’s financial interests is an important element of that commitment.”

-- Victor Dirnfeld, former president, CMA

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