

A Century of Health: UC-Trained Medical Professionals in California

The University of California has provided graduate training to health professionals since Toland Medical College was transferred to the UC Regents in 1872, and is the oldest continuously-operating granter of health-related graduate degrees in the state.

Today, UC awards approximately 800 degrees each year to doctors, dentists, veterinarians, and optometrists who end up practicing in the state of California, according to state licensing records. The

more than 10,000 professionals who have graduated UC health-oriented graduate schools since 1999 currently practice in more than 850 California cities and towns, or 62 percent of all towns with any practicing medical professionals. An additional 15,000 professionals—mostly doctors—have completed residencies at UC health facilities.

To compile a longitudinal history of the graduates of UC health-related fields, IRAP has constructed a complete record

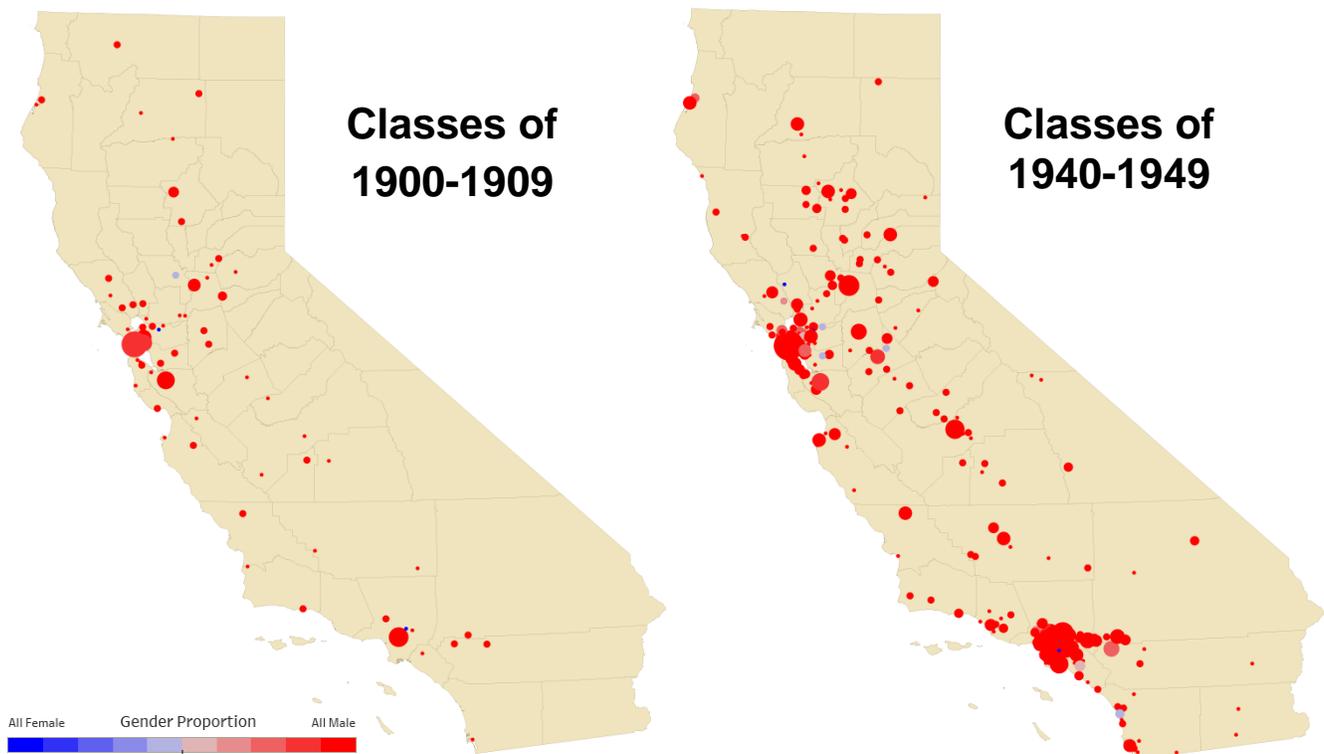


Figure 1: The towns or cities where doctors with UC medical degrees who graduated in the decade following 1900 or 1940 practiced medicine (in 1920 or 1956, respectively). Circle size is log-proportional to the number of doctors in that town, while the color gradations display the proportion of doctors who were male or female.

of UC medical and dental students through the 1940s, medical licensing records up to the late 1950s, and records for all still-practicing UC-trained health professionals (including optometrists and veterinarians, with nurses and pharmacists still to come) by merging student records from the UC Corporate Data Center with both current and historical licensing records collected by the Medical Board of California and the Department of Consumer Affairs. Thousands more doctors and other medical professionals have been trained in UC residency programs, but they do not appear in the historical records.

Figure 1 shows the California cities in which early 20th century doctors with UC degrees practiced medicine around 15 years after graduation. Nearly half of the UC classes of 1900-1909 practiced in San Francisco (if they remained in California), but forty years later—with the opening of the UCLA medical school (now known as the David Geffen School of Medicine at UCLA) and the state’s explosive population growth—only 14 percent worked there, with many others moving to Los Angeles and the Central Valley.

Although UC has always admitted women to all of its graduate programs, only 10-15

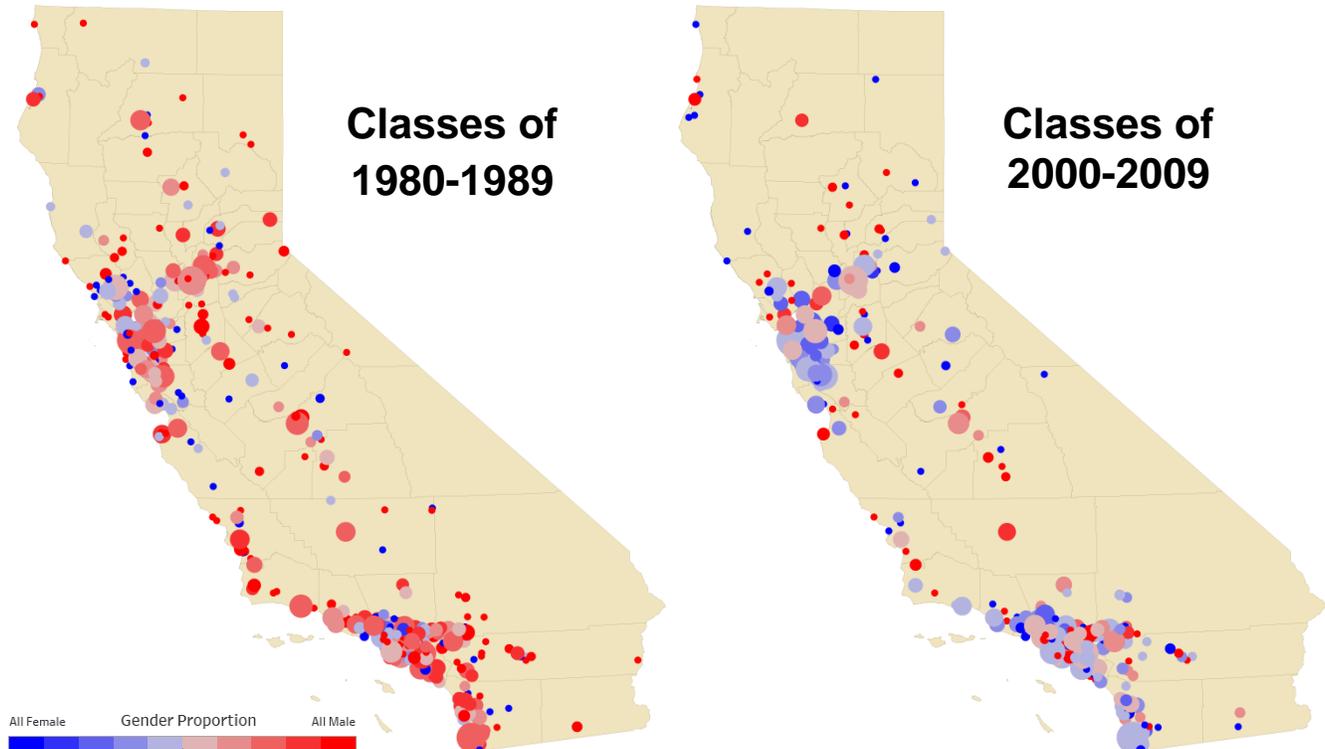


Figure 2: Doctors with UC medical degrees have become far more diverse in gender and ethnicity, and continue to provide medical care throughout the state of California. See the notes to Figure 1.

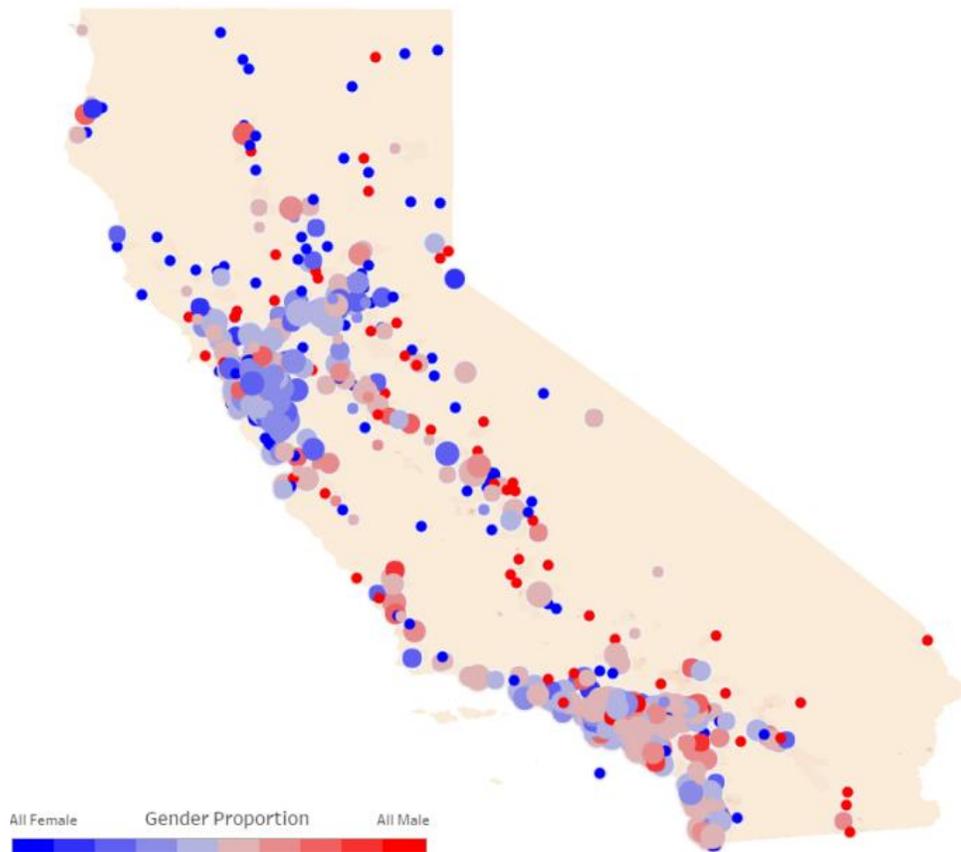


Figure 3: Locations of practice of UC-trained doctors, dentists, optometrists, and veterinarians in California (as of 2016), from our new [interactive dashboard](#). This figure includes both UC health graduates and former residents at UC medical centers.

percent of medical students were female through at least the 1940s. The proportion of female dentistry and pharmacy students was even lower—between 3 and 10 percent between 1920 and 1940—while about 3 percent of nursing students were male. By the 1980s, Figure 2 shows, the number of female students had increased dramatically, and by the mid-2000s, more women than men were graduating from UC and practicing medicine and dentistry in California. As the population of California grows and spreads out across the state, UC health

professionals have grown in number and geographic diversity. Doctors with UC medical degrees practiced in 68 cities and towns in 1900, 231 in 1940, and more than 350 since the 1980s, not including the hundreds of UC-trained doctors practicing across the country and the world. UC-trained health professionals work in more than 850 towns and cities across the state, displayed in Figure 3 and our new [interactive dashboard](#).

The proportion of practicing California doctors trained by UC has also varied

Table 1: Currently-Practicing Medical Professionals by Graduate School

	Doctors		Dentists		Optometrists		Veterinarians		Total	
	Number	Towns	Number	Towns	Number	Towns	Number	Towns	Number	Towns
UC Berkeley	-	-	-	-	1884	342	-	-	1884	342
UC San Francisco	4420	427	3487	494	-	-	-	-	7907	596
UC Los Angeles	5110	463	3613	469	-	-	-	-	8723	584
UC Davis	2521	366	-	-	-	-	3617	533	6138	607
UC San Diego	2837	339	-	-	-	-	-	-	2837	339
UC Irvine	3111	409	-	-	-	-	-	-	3111	409
Total	17999	670	7100	626	1884	342	3617	533	30600	858
Total California	127437	1123	77745	1090	9474	562	25355	916	240011	1388
Percent UC	14%	60%	9%	57%	20%	61%	14%	58%	13%	62%

The number of currently-licensed California health professionals with graduate degrees from the University of California, and the number of unique cities and towns in which they practice (identified from their street address). Source: Department of Consumer Affairs.

over time. In 1920, only about 8 percent of doctors were UC-trained, but by 1940 more than 18 percent of California doctors had UC medical degrees. Today, medical degrees from one of UC’s six medical schools are held by 14 percent of licensed California doctors, and two-third of licensed doctors who attended medical school in California earned their degrees from UC. Table 1 shows that UC provided professional training to 9 percent of currently-practicing California dentists, 14 percent of veterinarians, and 20 percent of optometrists, with even more having completed UC residency programs.

Table 1 also displays the number and proportion of California towns that have health professionals with UC degrees, by campus and discipline. There are 18,000 doctors, 7,000 dentists, and more than 5,000 optometrists and veterinarians in California with their graduate degrees from the University of California. The

doctors practice in 670 different towns, or 60 percent of all towns in California that have at least one doctor. Similarly, 57 percent of California towns with at least one dentist have a dentist trained by UC, along with 61 percent of towns with optometrists and 58 percent of towns with veterinarians. UC is the single largest provider of health sciences training not only in California’s large cities, but also statewide.

For more than a century, the University of California has provided high-quality graduate and post-graduate education to a demographically- and geographically-diverse group of California residents who have gone on to practice their professions in every corner of the state, one of many positive workforce benefits resulting from UC’s educational mission.

Historical records were digitized in partnership with the UC Cliometric History Project at UC Berkeley’s Center for Studies in Higher Education. See [their website](#) for more information.