51 per year between 1988 and 1992. The number of providers has been declining since 1982, when it was at a high of 2,908.

Between 1992 and 1996, the number of identified providers fell in all census divisions and in all states except the District of Columbia, New Jersey and Utah, which experienced increases, and New Hampshire, North Dakota and South Dakota, where there was no change. The largest decrease occurred in California (62), which nevertheless continued to have more providers (492) than any other state. Decreases of 20 or more also occurred in New York, North Carolina and Pennsylvania. The percentage decline was greater in the East South Central states (31%) than in other census divisions (not shown). The number of providers fell by one-third or more in Tennessee (39%), Alaska (38%), New Mexico (35%) and Kansas (33%). In Tennessee, New Mexico and Kansas, the loss of providers continued declines that were evident between 1982 and 1992.

### Types of Providers

An abortion provider was defined as a place where abortions are performed, whether a hospital, clinic or physician’s office. If an organization offered abortion services at more than one location, each service site was counted as a provider. The number of providers is different from the number of physicians who perform abortions, because one physician could be responsible for services in several facilities, and several physicians could perform abortions in a single setting.

- **Hospitals.** The 2,042 abortion providers in 1996 included 703 hospitals where one or more abortions were performed during the year (Table 6). As a proportion of all providers, hospitals declined from 36% in 1992 to 34% in 1996 (not shown); in 1973, 81% of all providers had been hospitals.10 Similarly, the number of abortions performed in hospitals fell from 110,000 in 1992 to fewer than 93,000 in 1996, although the proportion of all abortions that were performed in hospitals remained at about 7%.

- **Abortions were performed in only 14% of short-term, general, nonfederal hospitals (16% if Catholic hospitals are excluded). These proportions are two percentage points lower than in 1992. Private (including voluntary) hospitals were somewhat more likely to offer abortion services (18%, excluding Catholic hospitals) than were public hospitals (10%, not shown).**

In many of the hospitals classified as providers, only a few abortions are performed. Hospitals that allow abortions to be performed only when a woman’s life or health are threatened by the continuation of her pregnancy are counted as abortion providers, even if only one abortion was performed at the facility. A majority (58%) of the hospitals that reported abortions provided fewer than 30 abortions each; these facilities together accounted for only about 4,500 procedures. In 1996, only 12 hospitals performed 1,000 or more abortions.

In keeping with the national trend toward day surgery, a large majority of hospital abortions are performed as outpatient procedures. In 1996, the proportion of inpatient abortions fell to 9%, down from 11% in 1992 (not shown). Of all abortions, fewer than 1% involved hospitalization of the woman (excluding cases where the woman may have been hospitalized for treatment of complications).

- **Nonhospital facilities.** Most abortions are performed in the country’s 452 abortion clinics (defined as nonhospital facilities in which half or more of patient visits are for abortion services). The proportion of abortions that are performed in abortion clinics increased from 60% in 1985 to 69% in 1992 and 70% in 1996, although only 22% of all providers are abortion clinics.

- “Other clinics” include group practices with clinic names, surgical centers, health maintenance organizations, family planning clinics and other facilities with clinic names. (In addition, physicians’ offices where 400 or more abortions were performed in 1996 were counted as “other clinics” if they did not fit our definition of abortion clinics.) The “other clinics” accounted for 20% of all abortion providers and 21% of abortions in 1996. Four out of five performed fewer than 1,000 abortions a year, compared with only one of five abortion clinics.

Physicians’ offices comprise both solo and group practices where fewer than 400 abortions were performed in 1996. (However, some similar providers were counted as clinics because they had adopted clinic-like names.) Approximately 44% of physicians’ offices reported 30 or fewer abortions in 1996, and the group as a whole performed only 3% of the country’s abortions, down from 4% in 1992.

- **Trends in numbers of providers.** While the overall number of providers dropped by 14% between 1992 and 1996, the loss was greater among hospitals (18%) than among nonhospital facilities (12%), and was greater among public hospitals (23%) than among private ones (16%) (Table 7). This pattern of change was the same between 1982 and 1992, when the number of public hospital providers fell from 331 to 180. There are now only 42% as many public hospital providers as in 1982 and 53% as many private ones.

The change in the number of nonhospital providers has been much less pronounced and has occurred almost entirely among physicians’ practices. In 1996, there were 20 fewer clinics than in 1992, but 80 more than in 1982. From 1992 to 1996, the number of abortion clinics increased by 11, while the number of other clinics providing abortions decreased by 31 (not shown). At the same time, abortion services provided by physicians’ offices declined 26%. The decline was greater among...