



## Guidance to NHSC clinicians on fulfilling service obligations when a mandatory furlough or reduction-in-force has taken place

**First, the NHSC recognizes that these are very difficult economic times for many Americans coping with the current recession. The NHSC has recently been asked numerous times about the options for a National Health Service Corps primary care clinician who may be subject to a mandatory furlough or reduction-in-force.**

**Answer: First, we must remind everyone that all NHSC primary care clinicians are required to engage in the full-time clinical practice of the profession for which s/he was awarded an NHSC LRP or Scholarship. Full-time clinical practice is defined as a minimum of 40 hours per week, of which 32 hours must be spent providing direct clinical services.** The 40-hour per week requirement may be compressed into no less than 4 days per week, with no more than 12 hours of work to be performed in any 24-hour period. Time spent in "on-call" status will not count toward the 40-hour week. Hours worked over the required 40 hours per week will not be applied to any other workweek.

It is important to note that the NHSC will not waive the 40-hour work week or the maximum allowable 35 work days away from the assigned site as described in the NHSC Applicant Information Bulletin and clinician contract. However, the NHSC will work with any participant who may not be able to meet the 40-hour work week requirement because of a mandated furlough or reduction in force. If an NHSC participant is forced to exceed the allowable time away from their site during a service year as a result of such an action and no other options are available to satisfy this requirement, then the participant's service end date will be recalculated (extended) accordingly.

Rest assured, the NHSC will work in every way possible and allowable to meet the above requirements before resorting to an extension of the service end date. For example, some clinicians who have been or may be affected by furloughs are exploring employment opportunities at other NHSC-approved sites (i.e., adding an additional site or requesting a transfer to another site) to ensure that they are able to meet the above full-time clinical practice requirements. Others are seeking approval from their sites to report to work and perform practice-related administrative activities (not to exceed 8 hours per week) in accordance with NHSC requirements (described above) on scheduled "furlough" days so that they can continue to receive credit toward their NHSC service.

Participants who may be affected by a mandatory furlough or reduction in force should contact the NHSC immediately at (800) 221-9393 or (301) 594-4200, and a program representative will assist you.

**What are the options for a primary care clinician who is interested in applying for the National Health Service Corps (NHSC) Loan Repayment Program (LRP) who may be subject to a mandatory furlough or reduction-in-force?**

**Answer:** It is important to remind all applicants that NHSC primary care clinicians are required to engage in the full-time clinical practice of the profession for which he or she was awarded an NHSC LRP or Scholarship contract. Full-time clinical practice is defined as a minimum of 40 hours per week, of which 32 hours must be spent providing clinical services. The 40-hour per week requirement may be compressed into no less than 4 days per week, with no more than 12 hours of work to be performed in any 24-hour period. Time spent in "on-call" status does not count toward the 40-hour week. Hours worked over the required 40 hours per week cannot be applied to any other workweek.

It is important to note that the NHSC will not waive the 40-hour work week or the maximum allowable 35-workdays away from the assigned site as described in the NHSC Applicant Information Bulletin and clinician contract.

Primary care clinicians who are interested in the NHSC Loan Repayment Program and who **may be affected by a mandatory furlough or reduction in force** should contact the NHSC prior to submitting an application at (800) 221-9393 or (301) 594-4200, and a program representative will assist you.