



MENTORING NHSC PROVIDERS: PROVIDER'S GUIDE

Use this guide to help you engage in the mentoring process and provide structure to the relationship you form with your mentor. This guide will provide numerous suggestions on topics to cover and will give you a place to start.

At the Outset

When you first meet your mentor, you can get started by collecting some basic information. You may already have information about your mentor, but at a minimum, it may be helpful to be aware of the following information as you begin your mentoring relationship.

Name: _____

Discipline/Specialty: _____

Graduate/Health Professional School: _____ Year of Graduation: _____

Type of Residency/Training: _____

Current Employer: _____

Professional Affiliations: _____

Hobbies/Outside Interests: _____

Session One: Core Questions

At the beginning of your relationship, work with your mentor to identify your expectations for the exchange. Topics you may discuss include:

- Your vision of a mentoring relationship
- The areas in which you feel you might need particular support

You have the power to pilot the most successful mentoring relationship. Learn about your mentor's background and history and be prepared to share your background and your interest in serving as a primary care practitioner in a community in need.

Your mentor will also want to know about you and what motivated you to join the NHSC. Be prepared to talk about:

- What experiences impacted your decision to pursue a career in primary care?
- When did you first become aware of health disparities in America, and why did you choose to devote your career to addressing them?
- What do you hope to gain from working in a community with limited access to health care?
- What do you hope to achieve personally and professionally through your NHSC experience?



Once you've learned a bit about your mentor, use this opportunity to discuss your new position. You might want to ask about routine things such as the geography of the area, clinic procedures, human resources, and maintaining contact with the NHSC.

- Is there any NHSC-related paperwork that I need to file with Human Resources?
- What tax forms do I need for deducting my NHSC Scholarship award?
- How does the NHSC keep track of my progress?
- What are the basic clinic procedures?
- Is there a review process at this site?
- What are the unspoken rules of the organization?

You should also plan to discuss more substantive topics such as:

- What are the challenges associated with working in a Health Professional Shortage Area?
- How can I make the most of this opportunity so that it benefits my career?
- How can I best contribute to the team of health practitioners that work in this facility?

Session Two: Prepare to Work in a Culturally Diverse Community

Your job may be in a community that is very different from anything you have experienced. Your mentor will help prepare you to meet the challenges of working in a community with limited access to health care and recognize the opportunities it affords. Use this session to learn about the many facets of your new community and explore ways in which your community service history can be useful to you now.

This is an opportunity for you to learn from your mentor's experience. Here are some questions you can ask your mentor to get the conversation going:

- What can I expect when I start working at this site?
- In your experience, how do patients expect us to interact with them?
- How can I best support my colleagues?
- Did you face any cultural challenges when you first started working in this community? How can I learn from your experiences?

Your mentor will also want to know about the experiences you bring to the NHSC and to your current assignment. Be prepared to answer questions such as:

- What multicultural experiences have you had? How will they be useful at your NHSC-approved site?
- What do you know about this community and the general culture of the population?
- Do you know of any primary care trends that may be pertinent to this community? What are your thoughts about these trends? How will your thoughts affect the service you provide?
- Do you have any apprehension about your job?



Staff Members
at Waiane Coast
Comprehensive
Health Center,
Waiane, HI



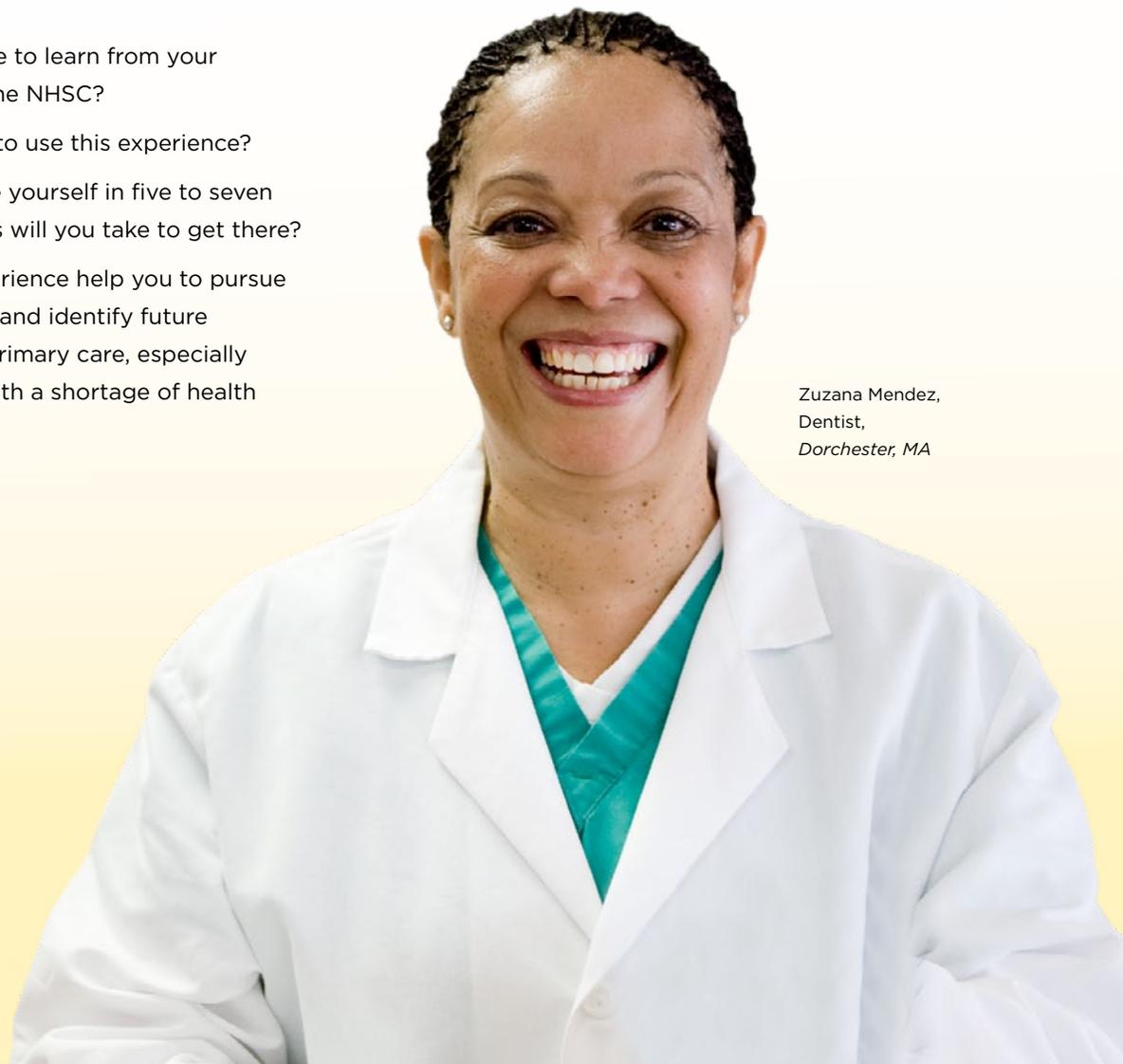
Session Three: Career Goals

Although your service commitment with the NHSC may be as short as two years, we hope your experience with the NHSC will launch you into a challenging and meaningful career as a health care practitioner—and you will continue to offer primary care to communities in need.

Let your mentor's experience help to guide your career with the NHSC and beyond. In this session you may wish to discuss your career goals with your mentor. Ask yourself these questions before the session; they will help you to think about your goals and ambitions and prepare you for a rich discussion with your mentor.

- What do you hope to learn from your experience with the NHSC?
- How do you plan to use this experience?
- Where do you see yourself in five to seven years? What steps will you take to get there?
- How will this experience help you to pursue your career goals and identify future opportunities in primary care, especially in communities with a shortage of health professionals?

By the end of the session you should have a sense of the steps you need to take and relationships you need to build to reach your career goals. You should also have an idea of various ways in which your mentor can help you to achieve these goals. Ask your mentor how you can leverage professional networks to support your learning experiences. Inquire about health professional associations that might provide you with networking opportunities, professional development opportunities, and other resources.



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