WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

Health Professional Shortage Areas (HPSAs) and Your Practice Site

What Types of Health Care Practice Sites are Approved by NHSC?

- Practice sites participating in the NHSC Loan Repayment Program that provide outpatient, ambulatory primary health care services in federally designated Health Profession Shortage Areas (HPSAs).
- NHSC-approved HPSA practice sites include:
  - Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHC)
  - FQHC Look-Alike
  - Rural Health Clinic (RHC)
  - Hospital-affiliated Primary Care Out Patient Clinic
  - Indian Health Service, Tribal Clinic, and Urban Indian Health Clinic (ITU)
  - State or Federal Correctional Facility
  - Private Practice (Solo/Group)
  - Other Health Facilities:
    - Community Mental Health Facility
    - Community Outpatient Facility
    - Critical Access Hospital
    - Free Clinic
    - Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) Health Service Corps
    - Mobile Unit
    - School-based Health Program
    - State and County Department of Health Clinic

Is Your Site a NHSC-Approved Practice Site?

- To verify the NHSC approval status of the practice site where you wish to satisfy your NHSC service obligation, please check the NHSC Approved Sites database, at http://datawarehouse.hrsa.gov/HGDWReports/OneClickRptFilter.aspx?rptName=NHSCAppSiteList&rptFormat=HTML3.2.
- If your site(s) is not listed, you should:
  - Take initial steps to have your current practice site approved by accessing the NHSC Web site, at http://nhsc.hrsa.gov/communities/apply.htm; or
  - Check the NHSC Job Opportunities List (JOL) for opportunities that currently qualify, http://nhscjobs.hrsa.gov.
What are the Requirements to Become a NHSC-Approved Practice Site?

Your practice site must:

- Be located in a HPSA
- Accept Medicare and have entered into an appropriate agreement with the applicable State agency for Medicaid and State Children’s Health Insurance Program beneficiaries
- Make every reasonable effort to secure payment in accordance with the schedule of fees or schedule of discounts from the patient and/or other third party
- Provide health care services at no charge or at a nominal charge to patients whose incomes are at or below 200% of the federal poverty guidelines
- Post a statement expressing that no one will be denied access to services due to inability to pay.

**Note:** While many practice sites have HPSA designations and meet some of the requirements listed, inpatient hospitals and other inpatient facilities, as well as county and local prisons, are not eligible to participate in the NHSC.

What is a HPSA?

- A Health Professional Shortage Area (HPSA) is a geographic area, population group, or health care facility that has been designated by the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) as having a shortage of health professionals.
- There are three categories of HPSAs:
  1. Primary Care
  2. Dental Health
  3. Mental Health.

Is Your Practice Site Located in a Designated HPSA Appropriate For Your Discipline and Specialty?

To determine if your practice site is located in a HPSA appropriate for your discipline and specialty, you should:

- Speak with your site administrator
- Contact your State Primary Care Office (PCO). A list of each PCO by state can be found here: http://bhpr.hrsa.gov/Shortage/pcos.htm
- Visit the HPSA Find search engine, at http://datawarehouse.hrsa.gov/GeoAdvisor/ShortageDesignationAdvisor.aspx where you will be able to insert the practice site’s physical address to determine its designation.

If your practice site is located in a HPSA:

- You or your State Primary Care Office (PCO) may work with your site to prepare and submit an NHSC Site Application to become a NHSC-approved practice site.
  - The NHSC Site Application and Instructions for NHSC approval are available at http://nhsc.hrsa.gov/communities/apply.htm and click on the "Become an NHSC Site. Apply Now." button.
  - It takes 6–8 weeks for a practice site to become approved by NHSC.

If your practice site is not located in a HPSA:

- You may contact and work with your state PCO to prepare and submit a HPSA designation request.
  - A list of each PCO by state can be found here: http://bhpr.hrsa.gov/Shortage/pcos.htm.

**Note:** For additional information regarding HPSA designations and/or practice site eligibility, please contact the HRSA Call Center at 1-800-221-9393.