

Direct Patient Care

The National Health Service Corps (NHSC) defines direct patient care as the clinical services provided and activities in which a provider participates that have a direct influence on the care of a patient or client, such as examinations, treatments, counseling, patient education, self-care training, and the administration of medications.

Hourly Requirement

Full-time participants who are licensed to serve in one of the disciplines/specialties approved for service under the NHSC Loan Repayment Program must work a minimum of **40 hours/week**, for a minimum of 45 weeks/service year. Time spent “on call” will not be counted towards the service commitment, except to the extent the provider is directly treating patients during that period.

Critical Access Hospitals (CAH)

Participants serving at a Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) approved Critical Access Hospital (CAH):

- Must spend at least **16 hours/week** must be spent providing direct patient care at the CAH-affiliated outpatient clinic.
- The remaining **24 hours/week** may be spent providing direct patient care at the CAH or the CAH-affiliated outpatient clinic, providing direct patient care at the CAH-affiliated skilled nursing facility or swing bed unit, or performing practice-related administrative activities (practice –related administrative time is limited to **8 hours/week**).

Teaching

Teaching activities must be performed at the NHSC-approved practice site(s) where the participant is assigned to complete their NHSC service.

- No more than **8 hours** of the minimum **40 hours/week**, can be spent performing teaching activities.
- The remaining **32 hours/week** must be spent providing direct patient care at the assigned practice site(s), of which **8 hours/week** can be spent performing clinical or non-clinical practice-related duties at the assigned practice site or at alternative settings, on behalf of the assigned NHSC-approved practice site where the participant is assigned to complete their NHSC service.

Participants, who serve at a **Health Resources and Services (HRSA) funded Teaching Health Center**, may perform teaching activities for up to **20 hours/week**.

- The remaining **20 hours/week** must be spent providing direct patient care at the assigned practice site(s), of which **8 hours/week** can be spent performing clinical or non-clinical practice-related duties at the assigned practice site or at alternative settings, on behalf of the NHSC-approved practice site where the participant is assigned to complete their NHSC service.

Non-Clinical Activities and Alternative Locations

To receive service credit and remain in compliance with the NHSC contract, ALL activities performed, must be directed by the NHSC-approved practice site(s) where the participant is assigned to complete their NHSC service. Participants must not perform the following duties during the minimum **40 hours/week**:

- Any clinical duties that are not approved for service under the NHSC for your discipline, such as surgeries not related to obstetrics/gynecology or general dentistry, services performed in a discipline/specialty other than what the NHSC has approved for the participant, or any activities not approved for service credit under the NHSC Loan Repayment Program.

- No more than **8 hours** can be spent performing administrative duties, or other non-clinical activities, such as organization and practice-related administrative tasks, clinical supervision.
- Job-related activities performed at locations other than those directed by the NHSC-approved practice site where the participant is assigned to complete their NHSC service. These activities must be limited to **8 hours or less/week**.

Primary Care Medical

Allopathic and Osteopathic Physicians (MD, DO)

Nurse Practitioners (NP)

Physicians Assistants (PA)

Certified Nurse Midwives (CNM)

Family Practice, Internal Medicine, Pediatrics, Adult and Women's Health

Of the minimum **40 hours/week**:

- At least **32 hours** must be spent providing direct patient care at the assigned practice site(s).
- No more than **8 hours** of the minimum **40 hours/week**, can be spent performing duties at other locations, such as hospitals, nursing homes, patient homes and shelters to receive service credit, and must be directed by the NHSC-approved practice site(s) where the participant is assigned to complete their NHSC service.

Obstetrics/Gynecology, Midwifery Geriatric Services, Family Practice w/OB (FP w/OB - only when obstetrics are performed regularly)

- At least **21 hours** must be spent providing direct patient care at the approved service site(s).
- The remaining **19 hours/week** can be spent providing direct patient care at the approved practice site(s), or performing obstetric/gynecological or geriatric services to the patients of the NHSC-approved practice site(s), at other locations, such as hospitals and nursing homes.

Dental Providers

Doctors of Dental Surgery (DDS)

Doctors of Medicine in Dentistry (DMD)

Registered Dental Hygienists (RDH)

Family General Dentistry

Of the minimum **40 hours/week**:

- At least **32 hours** must be spent providing direct patient care at the assigned practice site(s).
- No more than **8 hours** of the minimum **40 hours/week**, can be spent performing administrative duties.

Pediatrics & Geriatrics

Of the minimum **40 hours/week**:

- At least **21 hours** must be spent providing direct patient care at the assigned practice site(s).
- The remaining **19 hours/week** can be spent providing direct patient care at the approved practice site(s), or performing pediatric or geriatric dentistry to the patients of the NHSC-approved practice site(s), at other locations, such as hospitals, nursing homes, and schools.
- No more than **8 hours** of the minimum **40 hours/week**, can be spent performing administrative duties.

Mental and Behavioral Health

Allopathic and Osteopathic Physicians (MD, DO) - Psychiatry only

Health Service Psychologists (HSP)

Licensed Clinical Social Workers (LCSW)

Licensed Professional Counselors (LPC)

Marriage & Family Therapists (MFT)

Psychiatric Nurse Specialists (PNS)

Nurse Practitioners (NP) - Mental Health only

Physicians Assistants (PA) - Mental Health only

Of the minimum **40 hours/week**:

- At least 32 hours/week are spent providing patient care at the approved site(s).
- Of the minimum 32 hours spent providing patient care, no more than 8 hours per week may be spent in a teaching capacity.
- The remaining 8 hours/week may be spent providing patient care for patients at the approved site(s), providing patient care in alternative settings (e.g., hospitals, nursing homes, shelters) as directed by the approved site(s), and as an extension of care at the approved site, or performing clinical-related administrative activities (limited to 8 hours/week).