



NHSC LRP Mental and Behavioral Health Half-Time Requirements

Hourly Requirement

Half-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 **20 hours per week**, for a minimum of **45 weeks per 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.

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.

Critical Access Hospitals (CAH)

Participants serving at a CMS-approved Critical Access Hospital (CAH)

- Must spend at least **8 hours per week** must be spent providing direct patient care at the CAH-affiliated outpatient clinic.
- The remaining **12 hours per 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 **4 hours per 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 **4 hours** of the minimum **20 hours per week**, can be spent performing teaching activities.
- The remaining **16 hours per week** must be spent providing direct patient care at the assigned practice site(s), of which **4 hours per 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 **HRSA-funded Teaching Health Center**, may perform teaching activities for up to **10 hours per week**.

- The remaining **10 hours per week** must be spent providing direct patient care at the

assigned practice site(s), of which **4 hours per 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 per 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 **4 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 **4 hours** or less per week.

Mental and Behavioral Health

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

Physicians Assistants (PA) - *Mental Health only*

Nurse Practitioners (NP) - *Mental Health only*

Psychiatric Nurse Specialists (PNS)

License Clinical Social Workers (LCSW)

Licensed Professional Counselors (LPC)

Health Service Psychologists (HSP)

Marriage & Family Therapists (MFT)

Of the minimum **20 hours per week**,

- At least **11 hours** must be spent providing direct patient care at the assigned practice site(s).
- The remaining **9 hours per week** can be spent providing direct patient care or other clinical duties.
- No more than **8 hours per week** providing clinical services in **telemedicine** as direct patient care if:
 - 1) both the originating site (location of the patient) and the distant site (the NHSC-approved site where the applicant works) are located in a HPSA meeting the HPSA score requirements associated with the contract under which the participant was awarded;
 - 2) the applicant satisfies all applicable licensing requirements for their health profession and the NHSC requirement to be licensed in the State of practice (i.e., if the originating site and distant site are in different States, the applicant must be licensed in both); and
 - 3) the applicant's telemedicine encounters are no more than 25 percent of direct patient care hours (i.e., no more than **8 hours per week**).