

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

Health Professional Shortage Areas (HPSAs) and Your Practice Site

NATIONAL HEALTH
SERVICE
CORPS 

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>.

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HEALTH RESOURCES AND SERVICES ADMINISTRATION

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.