

# Health Professional Shortage Area (HPSA)

## WHAT ARE **HPSAs**?

Locations or population groups that meet criteria to qualify for a federal designation that makes them eligible for more than 30 federal program resources and benefits.

## WHICH LOCATIONS OR POPULATION GROUPS MAY BE ELIGIBLE FOR DESIGNATION?

- A distinct geographic area such as a county;
- A specific population group such as low-income population; or
- A specific health facility such as a Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC).

## WHAT ARE SOME OF THE KEY DESIGNATION CRITERIA?

- Proposed service area must be rational. Rational Service Areas (RSA) may be Whole County, established neighborhoods, populations with similar socioeconomic characteristics, or an area with physical access barriers to health care services.
- Provider to population ratio.
- Travel time to reach provider.
- Indicators of high need such as infant mortality rate, poverty population, birth rate, or other barriers.

For more information on designation criteria: <http://bhpr.hrsa.gov/shortage/hpsas/index.html>

## WHAT TYPES OF HEALTH PROFESSIONAL DISCIPLINES MAY QUALIFY FOR A SHORTAGE DESIGNATION?

- The three disciplines are primary care, dental, and mental health.

## WHAT ARE SOME OF THE PROGRAMS FOR WHICH A HPSA MAY BE ELIGIBLE?

- J1 Visa Waiver Program
- National Health Services Corps
- Loan Assistance Repayment Program
- Enhanced Medicare and Medicaid reimbursement

The Maryland Primary Care Office (PCO) facilitates the federal **HPSA** designation process. Designations are awarded at the federal level by the Shortage Designation Branch of the Bureau of Health Professions (BHP). For more information, visit: [http://fha.maryland.gov/ohpp/pco\\_shortage.cfm](http://fha.maryland.gov/ohpp/pco_shortage.cfm).

Fact Sheet prepared by:  
The Office of Health Policy and Planning's Family Health Administration

**Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene**

*Martin O'Malley, Governor*  
*Anthony G. Brown, Lt. Governor*  
*Joshua M. Sharfstein, M.D., Secretary*

**Family Health Administration**  
*Donna Gugel, MHS, Acting Director*

