

# “Piecing Together the Healthcare Access Puzzle”

Primary Care Organization (PCO)

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**Presenter:**

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# PCO Program Description

The Primary Care Organization (PCO) is responsible for promoting access to health care services for all Maryland residents. The PCO is funded by the federal Bureau of Health Professions (BHPr).

# PCO – Principal Functions



Shortage Designations



Workforce Development

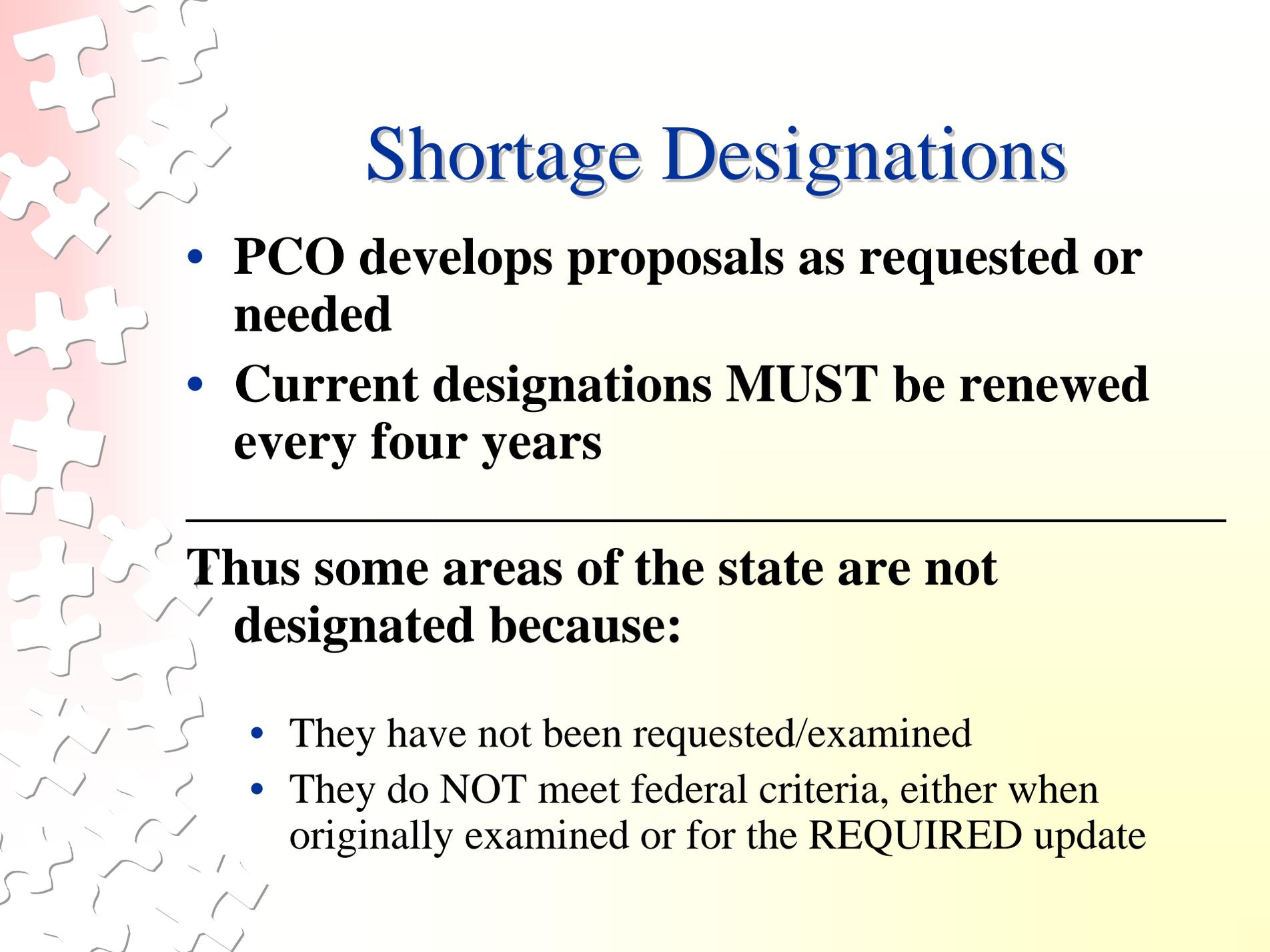


Community Engagement



Special Projects





# Shortage Designations

- **PCO develops proposals as requested or needed**
  - **Current designations MUST be renewed every four years**
- 

**Thus some areas of the state are not designated because:**

- They have not been requested/examined
- They do NOT meet federal criteria, either when originally examined or for the REQUIRED update

# Shortage Designations – Federal Criteria

- Service Area
- Contiguous areas
- Travel times
- Provider capacity
- Population demographics
- Population health status
- Other indicators as warranted
- Thresholds and other adjustments also apply

# Shortage Designations – Benefits

## **Health Professional Shortage Area (HPSA)**

- Enhanced Medicaid/Medicare reimbursement
- Deployment of needed health professionals

## **Medically Underserved Area/Population (MUA/P)**

- Establishment of Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs)
- J-1 Visa Waiver Program

# Health Professional Shortage Areas (HPSAs)

## **Three health care disciplines:**

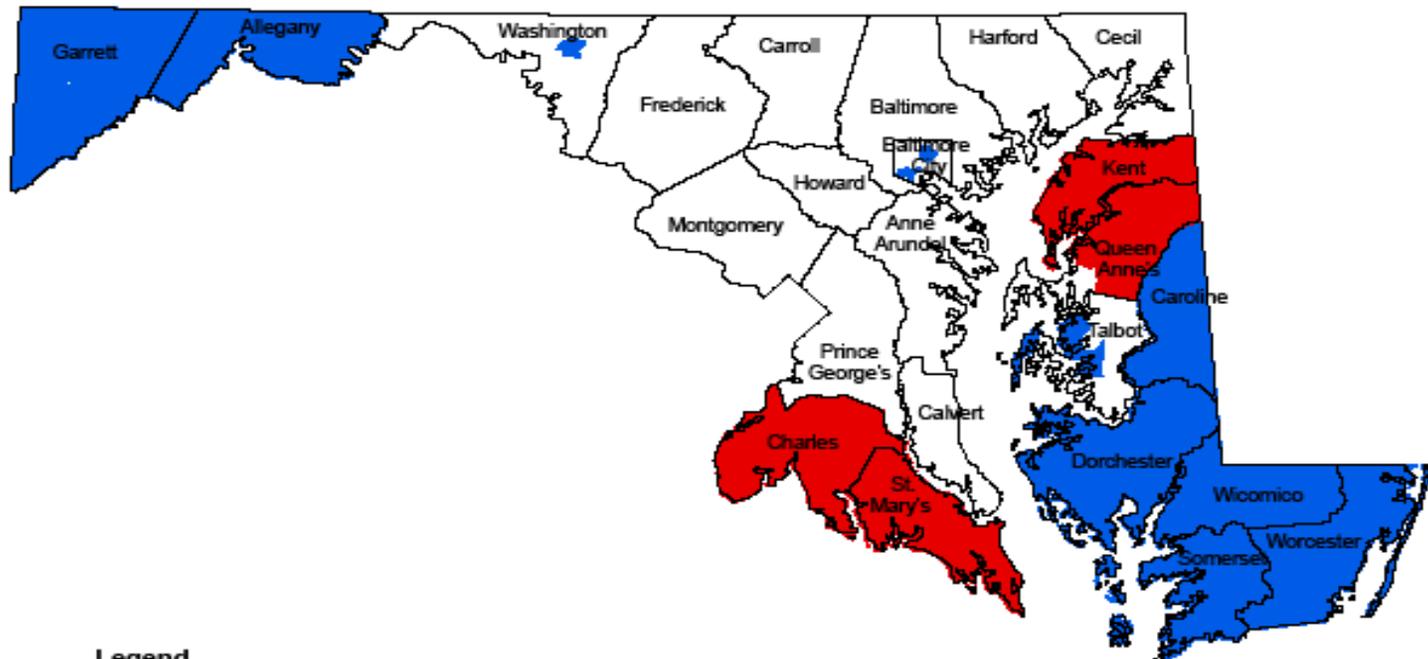
- Dental Health
- Mental Health
- Primary Care

## **Three types of provider categories:**

- Facilities, e.g., penal institutions
- Geographic areas, e.g., census tracts, counties
- Populations, e.g., low income, Medicaid

# Map of Dental HPSAs

## Maryland Health Professional Shortage Area (HPSA) Designations for Dental Care as of 4/10/2008\*



### Legend

- Geographic HPSA Designation
- Low Income HPSA Designation

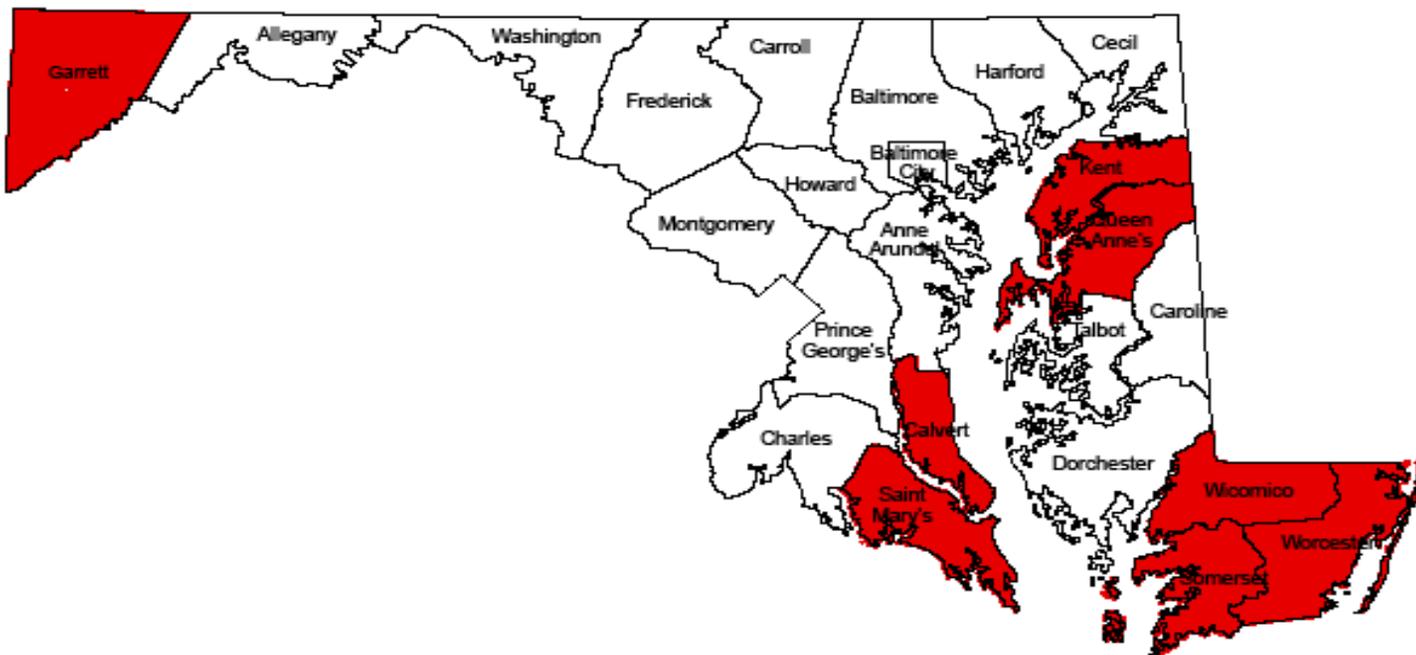
\*For updated information on federal shortage designations visit <http://hspafind.hrsa.gov>

Prepared by Office of Health Policy and Planning, Family Health Administration, Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene.



# Map of Mental Health HPSAs

## Maryland Health Professional Shortage Area (HPSA) Designations for Mental Health as of 4/10/2008\*



### Legend

 Geographic HPSA Designation

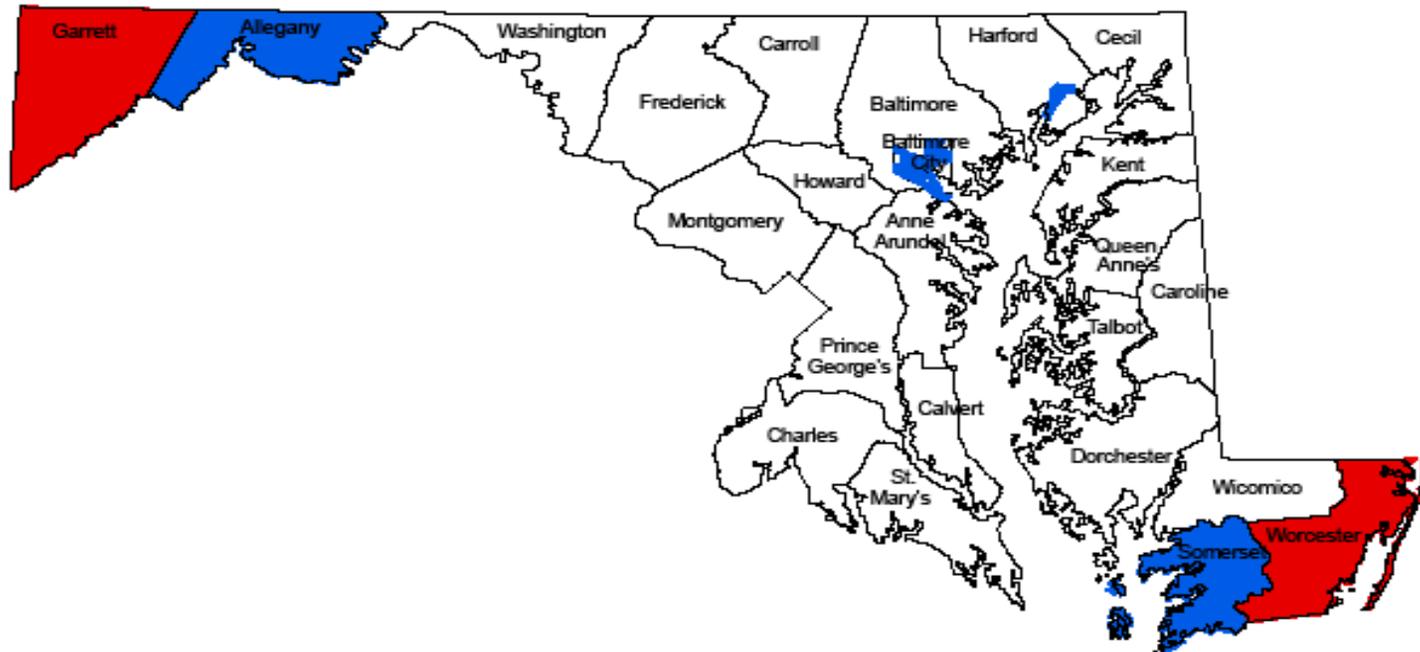
\*For updated information on federal shortage designations, visit: <http://hpsafind.hrsa.gov/>

Prepared by the Office of Health Policy and Planning, Family Health Administration, Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene



# Map of Primary Care HPSAs

## Maryland Health Professional Shortage Area (HPSA) Designations for Primary Care as of 4/10/2008\*



### Legend

- Geographic Designations
- Low Income Designations

\*For updated information on federal shortage designations visit <http://hspafind.hrsa.gov>

Prepared by Office of Health Policy and Planning, the Family Health Administration, Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene.



# Medically Underserved Area/Population (MUA/P)

## **Two types:**

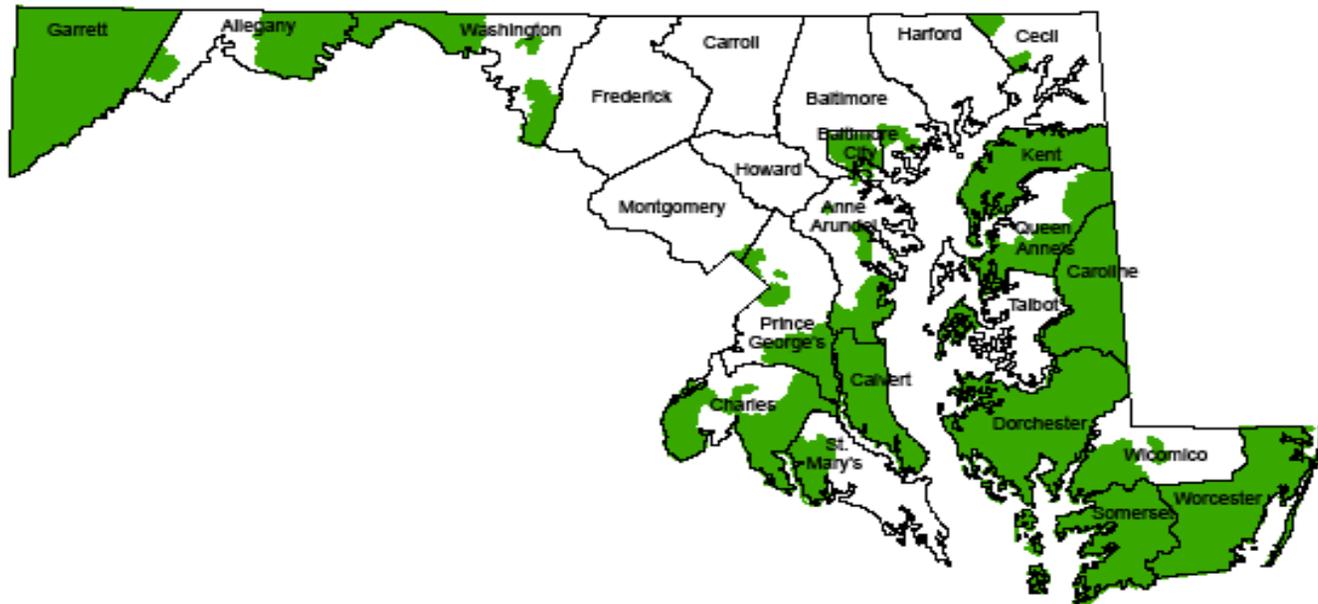
- Geographic areas – MUAs
- Populations – MUPs  
(Groups of census tracts or an entire county)

## **Methodology elements include:**

- Primary care physicians, infant mortality rate, number aged 65 and older, number in poverty

# Map of MUA/Ps

## Maryland Medically Underserved Area/Population Designations as of 4/10/2008\*



### Legend

 Federally Designated Medically Underserved Areas/Populations

\*For more information on federal shortage designations visit <http://muafind.hrsa.gov>.

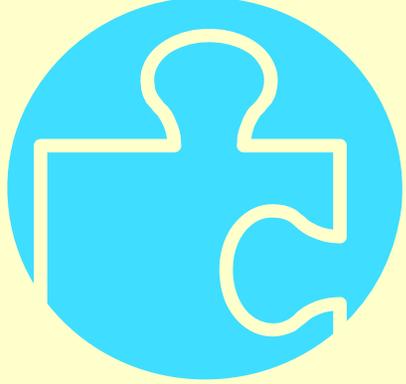
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# Workforce Development

- 🧩 J-1 Visa Waiver Program
- 🧩 Loan Assistance Repayment Program (LARP)
- 🧩 National Health Service Corps (NHSC)
- 🧩 Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHC)



## J-1 Visa Waiver Program

- ❧ J-1 visa requires physicians with foreign nationalities to return to their home country for two years at the end of their medical training.
- ❧ The waiver is granted in exchange for the physician's work in an underserved area for three years.
- ❧ The PCO reviews applications and makes recommendations to the U.S. Department of State.
- ❧ 30 J-1 Visa Waivers are allotted per federal fiscal year (Oct. 1<sup>st</sup> - Sept. 30<sup>th</sup>).

# Loan Assistance Repayment Program (LARP)

## For physicians (U.S. citizens) who provide care in shortage areas:

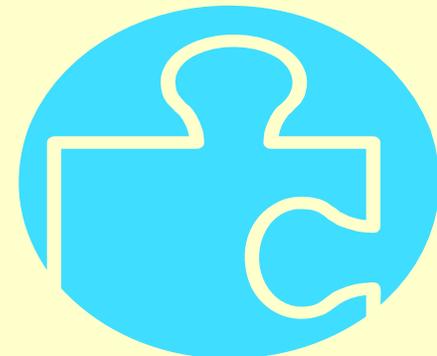
- Primarily for physicians, but residents also allowed
- Physician agrees to practice in a shortage area for up to four years
  - Federal funds require practice in a designated HPSA
  - General funds may be used for either HPSAs or state identified shortage areas

## Types of health professionals eligible:

- Currently only two physician specialties allowed – primary care and psychiatrists
- Other physician specialties and disciplines (e.g., dentists) could be proposed for approval

## Program is jointly administered by:

- PCO for DHMH, and
- Maryland Higher Education Commission (MHEC)



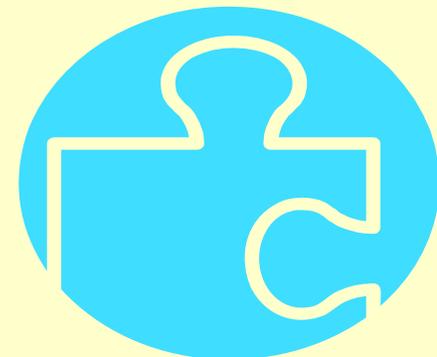
# National Health Service Corps (NHSC)

## Eligible Health Professionals include:

- Primary Care Physicians
- Psychiatrists
- Dentists
- Nurse Practitioners
- Nurse Midwives
- Dental Hygienists
- Psychologists
- Clinical Social Workers
- Marriage/Family Therapists

## PCO's Role:

- Review sites' eligibility per federal criteria
- Recommend to NHSC eligible sites for placement of eligible health professionals, but final decision is made by the federal government – HRSA in DHHS



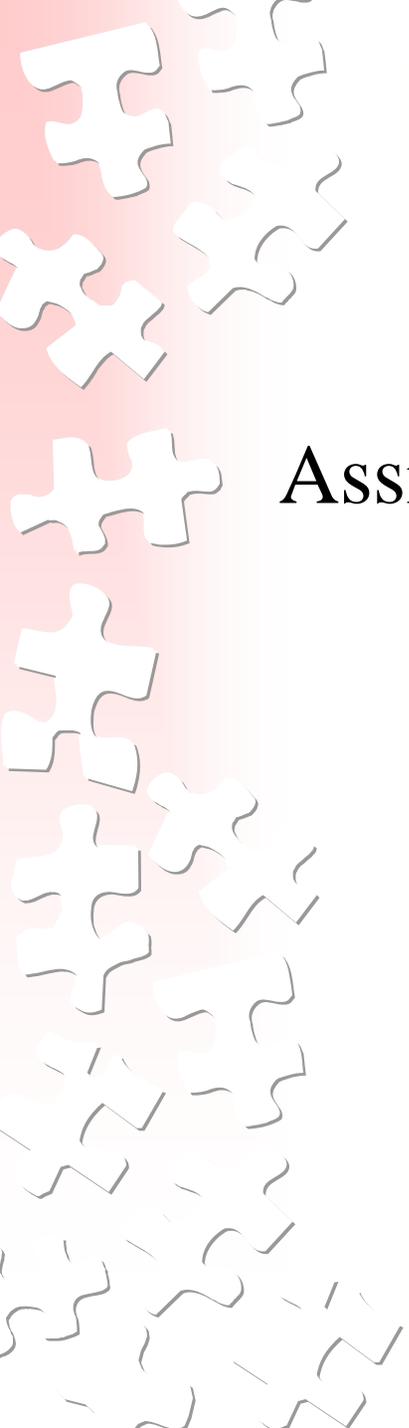


- **Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs)**

- Are funded by the federal government (HRSA) to provide a comprehensive array of primary and other health care services, directly or by referral
- There are 15 FQHCs in Maryland with multiple sites throughout
- Must be located in a Medically Underserved Area (MUA)

- **The Mid-Atlantic Association of Community Health Centers (MACHC)**

- Is federally funded to represents several of the FQHCs in MD, DC, and Delaware
- Partners with the PCO in promoting health care access for the underserved



# Community Involvement

Assist communities, including FQHCs, with:

- Assessing need for services
- Identifying and applying for funding
- Identifying and proposing areas for shortage designation
- Health professional recruitment and retention
- Education and advocacy needs
- Technical assistance needs

# Policy Special Projects

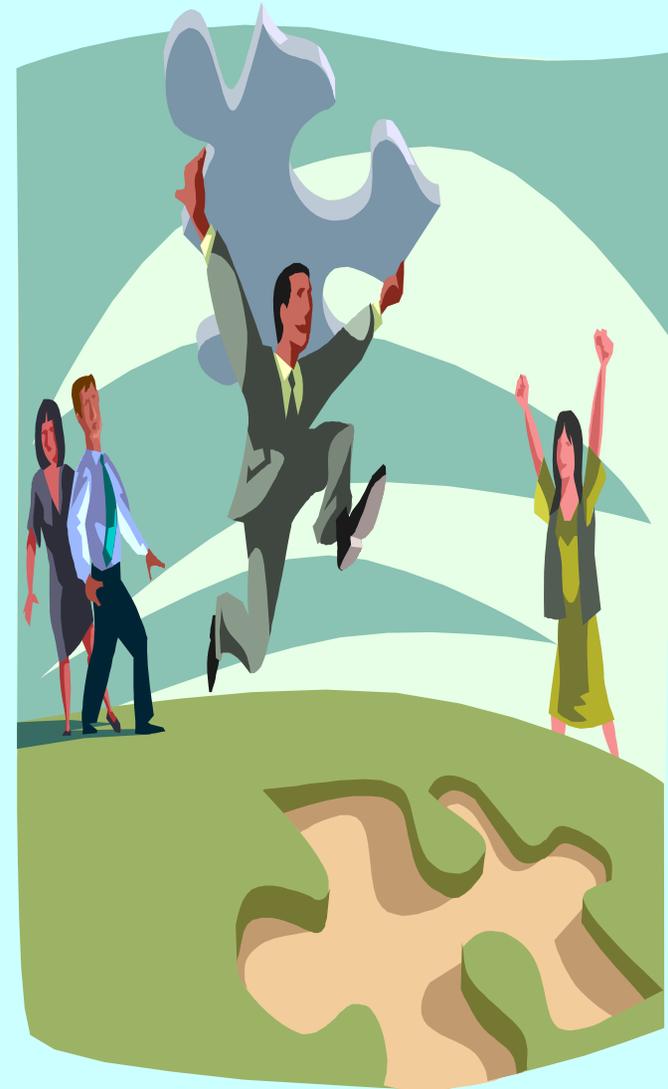
**The PCO provides staff and other support for health workforce related projects based in other parts of the Department/state agencies:**

- Advisory Council on Workforce Shortage (MHEC)
- Cultural Competency & Health Outcomes (OMHHD)
- Maryland Dent-Care Loan Assistance Repayment Program (CPHS)
- Mental Health Transformation Incentive Grant (MHA)
- Statewide Commission on the Shortage in the Health Care Workforce (DHMH)



# Office Resources

- Federal grant is dedicated fully toward salaries
- Staff
  - Two full time persons
  - 2 part-time persons
  - Volunteers/Collaborators
- PCO Database
  - Provider Data
  - Facility Data
  - HPSA/MUA Data
  - Demographic & Health Statistic Data



# Challenges

- **PCO is a small program with major impact on:**
  - access to care for the underserved
  - development of critical community health resources
- **Resource limitations have led to:**
  - backlog in preparation of federal shortage proposals
  - minimal time for workforce monitoring/marketing
  - minimal time for community engagement functions



# Contact Information

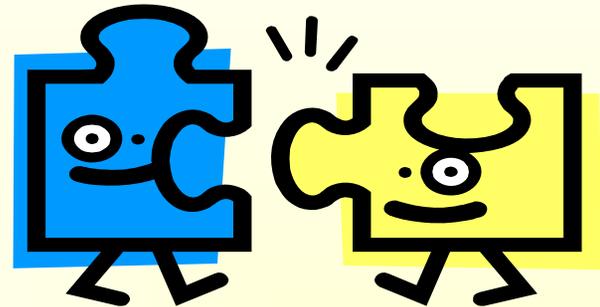
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