

# Primary Care Office

**Inside This Issue:**

- Updates on shortage designations and workforce programs
- Workforce retention project underway
- Valuable health-related resources
- PCO Advisory Council Meeting coming up!

**Maryland  
Department of  
Health and Mental  
Hygiene**

Martin O'Malley  
Governor

Anthony G. Brown  
Lt. Governor

John M. Colmers  
Secretary, DHMH

**Family Health  
Administration**

Russell Moy, M.D., M.P.H.  
Director, FHA

Joan H. Salim  
Deputy Director, FHA



## WELCOME TO OUR FIRST NEWSLETTER!

Welcome Maryland Healthcare leaders to the first edition of the Maryland Primary Care Office (PCO) Newsletter. It is the PCO's mission to improve access to healthcare for all residents of our honored state. It is also our goal to better improve communication with the people and organizations that we serve and inform them of what it is we do, who we partner with, and what we have achieved. It is our hope that this newsletter will reach a broader and more diversified audience than could be achieved through normal day to day meetings.

This newsletter will be produced quarterly, and contain information that directly affects Maryland shortage designations and workforce programs.

The PCO is also drafting a bi-yearly review assessing provider shortage designations around the State. Look for that report later this year or early next year!

Just in case you missed it, *Forbes.com* cited four of Maryland's counties as the richest counties in the nation. In the March 2010 posting, "Forbes' 25 Richest Counties in the Nation," Howard County ranked number three, Montgomery County ranked number 10, Calvert County ranked number 13, and Charles County ranked number 21. For more information, you may go to: [www.forbes.com/2010/03/04/america-richest-counties-lifestyle-real-estate-wealthy-suburbs\\_slide.html?partner=yahoo](http://www.forbes.com/2010/03/04/america-richest-counties-lifestyle-real-estate-wealthy-suburbs_slide.html?partner=yahoo).

Robin Sroka, PCO Research Associate since 2008, will be leaving us for a better opportunity in the middle of May. We wish Robin much success, and know she will do fantastic in her new job. With that said, let's welcome the PCO's new Research Associate, Kade Patanavanich!

I hope you enjoy our first issue and hope to hear feedback from everyone as to what we should add or discontinue. Please send comments to [evaidya@dhhm.state.md.us](mailto:evaidya@dhhm.state.md.us).

Best regards,

*Elizabeth Vaidya*

Liz Vaidya  
PCO Director



## SHORTAGE DESIGNATIONS

### MARYLAND'S HEALTH PROFESSIONAL SHORTAGE AREAS (HPSAs) AND MEDICALLY UNDERSERVED AREAS/POPULATIONS (MUA/Ps)

Each quarter, the PCO intends to publish updates on the recent analyses done within the state to designate HPSAs and MUA/Ps. From January to March of this year, the office reviewed a total of 18 areas and facilities. These efforts allowed for nine areas to be submitted to the Shortage Designation Branch for approval of either a HPSA or MUA designation. These recommendations, if approved by HRSA, will improve health care services to 227,971 individuals in Maryland.

To view maps of Maryland displaying current shortages, click on one or more of the following:

[Primary Care HPSA](#)

[Mental Health HPSA](#)

[Dental HPSA](#)

[MUA/P with FQHCs](#)

## WORKFORCE



## PROGRAMS

The Primary Care Office continues to address workforce shortages by assisting in recruiting health care providers to areas around Maryland facing the greatest deficiencies in access to care.

- In CY 2009, the PCO:
  - Approved a total of 10 Janet Hoffman Loan Assistance Repayment Program (LARP) participants;
  - Approved two awards at \$25,000 per year for ARRA LARP participants; and
  - Reviewed and recommended 26 site applications for the National Health Service Corps (NHSC).
- In federal FY 2009, the PCO:
  - Recommended nine National Interest Waiver applicants; and
  - Recommended 21 J-1 Visa Waiver applicants.

## PCO BEGINS NEW PROJECT TO EVALUATE RETENTION OF WORKFORCE PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS

The State Office of Rural Health recently welcomed new staff member, Esther Roh, who is heading up a project aimed at evaluating retention rates for physicians enrolled in workforce programs throughout Maryland. The goal of these programs (J1 Visa Waiver Program, LARP, and NHSC) is to improve access to primary care services in federally designated shortage areas. This project strives to answer questions such as: Do physicians tend to stay in an underserved area after their obligation ends? and What factors influence physician retention in

underserved areas? It is important to understand retention rates for these workforce program participants as a way of setting future retention goals and measuring success. As well, the Primary Care Office hopes to better understand why providers leave or stay in underserved areas so that recruitment strategies can be more in tune to the reasons physicians will serve the underserved. The PCO looks forward to updating stakeholders on the results of this study.

## PUBLICATIONS AND RESOURCES



### 3RNet ([www.3rnet.org](http://www.3rnet.org))

The National Rural Recruitment and Retention Network (3RNet) members are not-for-profit organizations helping health professionals find jobs in rural and underserved areas throughout the country. Medical facilities may post and recruit positions online. 3RNet provides information on loan forgiveness programs, offers advice on the recruitment process, and helps find the best match for health professionals and facilities. For more information, please visit [www.3RNet.org](http://www.3RNet.org) or contact the SORH at [ohpp@dhmh.state.md.us](mailto:ohpp@dhmh.state.md.us).



### U.S. Department of Agriculture: Economic Research Service

New and updated information is available from [USDA ERS](http://www.ers.usda.gov) on national and state level topics. State fact sheets are a great resource for data on population, per-capita income, earnings per job, poverty rates, employment, unemployment, and more. The latest (2008) state and county poverty data has recently been released. See new items in all topics at [www.ers.usda.gov/whatsnew/](http://www.ers.usda.gov/whatsnew/). To see State fact sheets, visit [www.ers.usda.gov/statefacts/](http://www.ers.usda.gov/statefacts/).



### MD's Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS)

The MD BRFSS is funded by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The Maryland BRFSS survey has been ongoing since 1987. The emphasis of this survey is on health-related behaviors in the Maryland adult population with a specific focus on behaviors and conditions that place Maryland adults at risk for chronic diseases, injuries, and preventable infectious diseases. The survey is part of a surveillance effort conducted by the Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene in cooperation with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Annual sample size for this survey is approximately 4,400 interviews. For more information, please visit [www.marylandbrfss.org/](http://www.marylandbrfss.org/).

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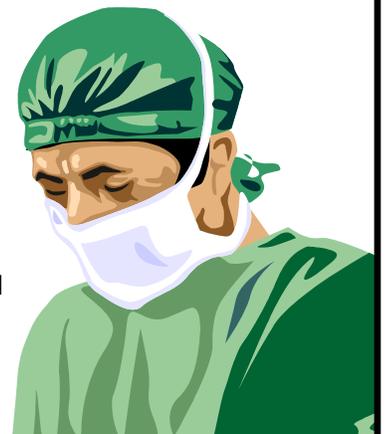
### In the News:

#### D.C. Resident Addresses Her Search for a Primary Care Doctor

*The Washington Post* recently published an article on the struggle to access health care in Washington D.C. The article, entitled "Having health insurance doesn't ensure it will be easy to find a doctor," emphasizes how shortages of doctors are felt not only in designated shortage areas, but throughout the entire district. To read the full article click [here](#).

#### Recent Increase in the Number of U.S. Medical Schools

According to *The New York Times*, the nation can expect an 18 percent increase in medical schools throughout the country. Although a debated issue, supporters believe that "having more doctors will improve care by: getting doctors to urban and rural areas where they are needed, shifting care to primary and family practice physicians rather than expensive specialists, and reducing long waits for people to see a doctor and get the care they need." To read the full article click [here](#).



# CALENDAR OF EVENTS



## PCO ADVISORY COUNCIL

The next PCO Advisory Council meeting will be held on **Thursday, April 29, 2010**. Since the last meeting, we are pleased to announce the election of Council Chair, Dr. Andrea Mathias, who is also the Deputy Health Officer for Worcester County.



### Maryland Primary Care Office

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**We're on the web!**  
[http://fha.maryland.gov/  
ohpp/](http://fha.maryland.gov/ohpp/)

**The Maryland PCO's mission is to improve access to health care services for all Marylanders in underserved communities by developing strong partnerships, building local resources, supporting and retaining health care providers, promoting relevant state and national health policies, and reducing**

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