

Health Professional Shortage Areas

What is a HPSA?

HPSAs are a rating system used to determine the highest areas of need for health care providers.

HPSAs are federal designations determined through data submitted by a state's Primary Care Office (PCO). There is one PCO in every state. You can find a list of all the PCOs here: <http://bhpr.hrsa.gov/shortage/hpsas/primarycareoffices.html>

HPSAs are designated using a scoring system. A 'HPSA score' is a number that can change over time and ranges from 1-25 for primary care and mental health HPSAs and 1-26 for dental HPSAs. The higher the HPSA score, the greater the need.

To learn more about HPSAs

- Visit <http://bhpr.hrsa.gov/shortage/hpsas/designationcriteria/index.html>
- Contact your PCO
- Contact your 3RNet member: <https://www.3rnet.org/members/organizational-members>

Types of HPSAs

HPSA scores can be calculated using three different methodologies:

- Low income
- Physician to population ratio
- Geographic

There are three different types of HPSAs:

- Mental Health
- Dental
- Primary Care

Knowing a HPSA score can provide some context about a facility. For example, a geographic HPSA could be designated because of distance between one facility and another. Conversely, a low income HPSA can occur in an urban, highly populated area or a rural, lower populated area. These examples are not exclusive scenarios for these HPSA designations.

What should you, a health care professional, know about HPSAs?

- Many loan repayment and scholarship programs use HPSAs to determine areas eligible for service. One example of this is the National Health Service Corps.
- All Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs) are automatically designated as a HPSA, although their individual HPSA scores may vary. Not all FQHC – Look-a-likes are necessarily designated as HPSAs.
- HPSA scores can change!
- Know who your PCO contact is: <http://bhpr.hrsa.gov/shortage/hpsas/primarycareoffices.html>

How can you find out if a facility is a designated HPSA?

- HRSA has a HPSA designation search tool that can be found here: <http://datawarehouse.hrsa.gov/GeoAdvisor/ShortageDesignationAdvisor.aspx> or here: <http://hpsafind.hrsa.gov/>

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