

PRIMARY CARE PHYSICIAN RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION PROGRAMS IN MASSACHUSETTS

**THIS INFORMATION HAS BEEN COLLECTED THROUGH A COLLABORATIVE EFFORT
BETWEEN THE
MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH
PRIMARY CARE OFFICE
AND
THE UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS MEDICAL SCHOOL
MASSAHEC NETWORK
A PROGRAM OF COMMONWEALTH MEDICINE**

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PRIMARY CARE PHYSICIAN RECRUITMENT PROGRAMS

A variety of programs are available to recruit primary care health professionals who will provide services in high-need/underserved communities in Massachusetts. These programs are funded by the federal and state government and other organizations and coordinated by state agencies and organizations at the national, state and community levels. Many of the program activities are coordinated through the Massachusetts Department of Public Health Primary Care Office.

MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH PRIMARY CARE OFFICE

The Massachusetts Primary Care Office (PCO) is funded in part by the federal Health Resources and Services Administration's (HRSA) Bureau of Clinician Recruitment and Services, Bureau of Health Professions and Bureau of Primary Health Care. The PCO works collaboratively with federal, state, and local partners to coordinate resources to address issues related to the delivery of comprehensive primary care services, and the retention, recruitment and oversight of health professionals for populations in medically underserved areas. The PCO conducts research and analysis of the healthcare delivery system and the population it serves to identify trends in access and develop strategies to address deficiencies. Working with the federal HRSA, the PCO serves as the point of contact for many federal and state workforce assistance programs, designed to help attract health professionals of various disciplines to join our healthcare provider community.

The mission of the Massachusetts PCO is to promote and advocate for comprehensive primary health care access for all residents.

UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS MEDICAL SCHOOL COMMONWEALTH MEDICINE MASSAHEC NETWORK

The Massachusetts Area Health Education Center (MassAHEC) Network is funded by the Health Resources and Services Administration's Bureau of Health Professions and the University of Massachusetts Medical School. The MassAHEC Network includes six community-based agencies that address health care workforce issues at the local level, an AHEC office at the Boston University School of Medicine, and a coordinating office at the University of Massachusetts Medical School in Worcester. The MassAHEC Network is housed in the Training, Education and Dissemination division of Commonwealth Medicine.

The mission of the MassAHEC Network is to reduce health disparities across the Commonwealth by enhancing the skills and increasing the diversity of the health care workforce and facilitating access to culturally and linguistically responsive health care services.

If you are aware of resources that should be included in this guide or have comments, please contact Joan Bohlke, MassAHEC-DPH Workforce Manager, Massachusetts Department of Public Health, 617-624-5991, Joan.Bohlke@state.ma.us

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Disclaimer: The contents of this document are subject to change at any time. Please contact the identified program to confirm deadlines and requirements.

Health Professional Shortage Areas Medically Underserved Areas Medically Underserved Populations



Certain areas of the state are designated as Health Professional Shortage Areas (HPSAs) or medically underserved areas and/or medically underserved populations (MUAs/ MUPs). These areas are identified by the Massachusetts Primary Care Office and approved by the federal Department of Health and Human Services Bureau of Health Professions, Shortage Designation Branch.

Health Professional Shortage Areas (HPSA, “hipsas”) are designated for primary care (family medicine, general practitioners, general pediatricians, general obstetricians/gynecologists, general internal medicine, and general geriatrics), dental or mental health. HPSAs are determined by:

- Geography, by designating an area of the state that has a shortage of providers for the total population in an identified rational service area (RSA)
- Population based, including underserved areas for low income populations, migrant or seasonal farm workers, Native Americans, or other populations who face specific language, cultural or access barriers
- Facility based designations, including public or non-profit facilities such as Rural Health Clinics or Federally Qualified Health Centers, or Correctional Facilities
- Federally recognized tribes
- Federal and state correctional facilities

Currently, HPSAs are updated approximately every five years through a complex assessment process. To determine the HPSA designation of an area or facility, visit <http://hpsafind.hrsa.gov> or contact the Primary Care Office to determine the latest designation.

HPSA and MUA/MUP designation may qualify a primary care clinician or facility for certain loans and recruitment incentive programs that are defined here.

Contact: MA-PCO-Shortagedesignation@state.ma.us or 617-624-5508

The Massachusetts Loan Repayment Program for Health Professionals



The goal of the Massachusetts Loan Repayment Program (MLRP) for Health Professionals is to increase the number of primary care health professionals providing services to the most vulnerable populations in the Commonwealth. The MLRP establishes contracts with qualified clinicians seeking financial support for professional education loan repayment. A grant from the federal Bureau of Health Professions and appropriated state funds through the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (MDPH) fund the program. Awards are not considered taxable income. Currently the MDPH Primary Care Office (PCO) administers two loan repayment programs for primary care physicians, Components A and C.

Component A Overview:

Doctors of Allopathic Medicine, Doctors of Osteopathic Medicine in Family Medicine, Osteopathic General Practice, Internal Medicine, Pediatrics, Obstetrics/Gynecology, Psychiatrists.

- U.S. Citizen
- Up to \$25,000/ yr. (\$50,000 total award over two years); continuation contracts available
- Applicants must work in a public and/or non-profit agency located in a federally designated health professional shortage areas (HPSA)
- Applications must be submitted jointly by the provider and public or non-profit agency
- Applicants must **not** be a National Health Service Corps member or a participant in other loan repayment programs concurrently; however, the MLRP can be sequenced with other federal and state programs and applicants can also reapply
- Applications are accepted on a rolling basis and reviewed quarterly
- Awards are made quarterly
- Applications must be submitted to the Massachusetts Primary Care Office

Component C Overview:

Doctors of Allopathic Medicine, Doctors of Osteopathic Medicine in Family Medicine, Osteopathic General Practice, Internal Medicine, Pediatrics, Obstetrics/Gynecology, Psychiatrists.

- U.S. Citizen, or legal permanent resident
- Practice either full time or part time
- Up to \$25,000/ yr. (\$50,000 total award over two years); continuation contracts available

- Applicants must work in the not-for-profit, non-profit, or public sector or at a relevant private or group practice and meet one of the following:
 - Medically underserved area/population (MUA/P), HPSA
 - Organizations not in HPSA or MUA/P with a payer mix at least 50% MassHealth & Medicaid and/or Medicare, Commonwealth Care, and/or for sliding fee scale
 - OR, at least 50% of patients reside in HPSAs and/or MUA/Ps, health centers, rural health clinic, outpatient primary care practices of small rural hospitals; public sector (non-federal) health facilities

Applications are accepted on an ongoing basis. Download the Request for Response (RFR) application and required forms at www.mass.gov/dph/hcworkforcecenter by clicking on [Assistance Programs](#).

Contact: Nicole.Watson@state.ma.us or 617-624-6051

Website: <http://www.mass.gov/dph/primarycare>

Community Health Center Primary Care Provider Loan Repayment Program



The Community Health Center Primary Care Provider Loan Repayment Program is managed by the Massachusetts League of Community Health Centers and is funded by donations from Bank of America, Commonwealth of Massachusetts, Neighborhood Health Plan, Blue Cross and Blue Shield Foundation of Massachusetts and Partners HealthCare. The program offers medical and nursing school loan repayment to primary care physicians and nurse practitioners who make a two-to-three year commitment to practice at one of the state's 52 community health centers.

While the bulk of program funding is for physicians and nurse practitioners seeking positions at health centers, there are some resources available for current providers.

- Must have outstanding educational loans from an accepted institution or loan program
- Forgivable loan awards of up to \$25,000 / yr. for up to 3 years
- Applications must be submitted to the Massachusetts League of Community Health Centers

Website and Applications:

<http://www.massleague.org/Programs/PrimaryCareProviderInitiatives/LoanRepaymentProgram-CHC.php>

University of Massachusetts Medical School

Learning Contract



The University of Massachusetts Medical School (UMass Med) offers matriculated medical students the opportunity to enter into a Learning Contract, which defers payment of tuition with approved service to the Commonwealth. A graduate must submit a request for approval to the Learning Contract Advisory Group. The service payback must meet one of three criteria: a primary care practice; practice in an underserved area; or community/public service of particular benefit to the Commonwealth.

- Eligibility: University of Massachusetts Medical School matriculated medical students
- Information is available in the UMass Medical School's Financial Aid Office
- Learning Contract defers payment of two-thirds of tuition each year until completion of advanced training; payment can then be made with approved service for four years as a full-time equivalent

Website:

<http://www.umassmed.edu/Content.aspx?id=88282&linkidentifier=id&itemid=88282>

Conrad-30/J-1 Visa Waiver Program



Federal law (Conrad Amendment to P.L. 103-416) provides MDPH with the authority to assist Massachusetts health care facilities located in federally designated medically underserved areas with physician recruitment by supporting a waiver request for physicians with a J-1 visa. This exemption waives the foreign residency rule for physicians, which requires them to return home for two years after training.

MDPH may support no more than thirty Conrad-30/J-1 Visa Waiver requests per federal fiscal year (October 1-September 30). Applications are reviewed with special attention to primary care services, identified areas of greatest need, and providing a service in the public interest in the Commonwealth. Applicants with language skills appropriate to the community that they intend to serve are also given priority.

The decision to support a waiver request is at the discretion of MDPH. Those requests that are supported by MDPH will be forwarded to the U.S. Department of State (DOS), Bureau of Consular Affairs, which reviews and forwards the approved J-1 Visa Waiver applications to the Bureau of Citizenship and Immigration Services.

Community Health Centers and hospitals with federally qualifying disproportionate share percentages, or other measure of high utilization by underserved populations, will receive priority as placement sites for Conrad 30 waivers through this program.

- Requests are accepted from the employing health care facility or practice located in a health professional shortage area (HPSA) or Medically Underserved Area/Population (MUA/MUP)
- The physician must agree to practice medicine full-time in the health care facility for a minimum of three (3) years and begin employment within ninety (90) days of receipt of their waiver
- Priority is for primary care physicians, including internal medicine, pediatrics, family practice, obstetrics/gynecology or psychiatry

Applications are accepted beginning on October 1 of each year; with a deadline of January 15. Applications are processed at MDPH and forwarded to the DOS. Physicians can submit multiple applications from different states; however, the DOS will process only the first application per physician.

The Primary Care Office informs both the applicant-facility and physician when his or her application is supported; and also informs those applicants that are not supported. This process is completed in approximately April/May.

A physician with an H-1B temporary worker visa who has already completed a three year service obligation may request a letter of support from the Massachusetts Department of Public Health, Primary Care Office when applying for permanent residency.

MDPH Primary Care Office Contact:

Contact : J1@dph.state.ma.us or 617-624-6051

Website: http://www.mass.gov/Eeohhs2/docs/dph/com_health/j1_visa_waiver_policies.pdf



US Department of Health and Human Services

Exchange Visitor Program

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (US-DHHS) Exchange Visitor Program also accepts applications to request a waiver of the two-year foreign residency requirement for participation in either a Research (Supplement A) or Clinical Care (Supplement B) program. The Clinical Care program brings additional visa slots to the Commonwealth, but is limited to certain sites.

Supplement B - Clinical Care

Physicians with J-1 visas must agree to deliver health care services for three years in mental health or primary care Health Professional Shortage Areas (HPSAs).

Physician Eligibility

The applicant must be a physician in a primary care specialty (family medicine, general internal medicine, general pediatrics, and obstetrics/gynecology) or general psychiatry.

Facility Eligibility

In order to target communities and populations with the greatest need for primary care and mental health services, US-DHHS will only process an application for waiver from a facility in or with a **Health Professional Shortage Area (HPSA) score of 07 or higher**. Furthermore, a facility in a HPSA that scores 07 or higher must be one of the following:

- A health center as defined under Section 330 of the Public Health Service Act, and which is receiving a grant from the U.S. Health Resources and Services Administration under this section
- A rural health clinic as defined under Sections 1102 and 1871 of the Social Security Act
- A Native American/Alaskan Native tribal medical facility as defined by the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act (P.L. 93-638)

Waiver Application Form and Supplement Instructions

The following items are required for the application:

- A [case number](#) obtained from the U.S. Department of State
- [Form HHS 426 – Application for Waiver of the Two-Year Foreign Residence Requirement of the Exchange Visitor Program \(DOC - 41KB\) \(PDF - 29KB\)](#)
- Supplement instructions:
 - [Supplement B – Clinical Care](#) (See also [Requirements for Waiver for Clinical Care](#))

For program details and program contact information, contact Michael K. Berry 301-443-4154 or visit <http://www.globalhealth.gov/exchangevisitorprogram/>

MDPH Primary Care Office Contact for technical assistance:

J1@dph.state.ma.us or 617-624-6051



HRSA

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
Health Resources and Services Administration

The Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), an agency of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, is the primary federal agency for improving access to health care services for people who are uninsured, isolated or medically vulnerable. HRSA is comprised of five Bureaus, one of which is the Bureau of Clinician Recruitment and Service (BCRS) that oversees recruitment and retention activities of health professionals. The National Health Service Corps is the major national primary care loan repayment and scholarship program under the BCRS.

National Health Service Corps



The National Health Service Corps (NHSC) is committed to improving the health of the nation's underserved by uniting communities in need with health professionals, and supporting communities' efforts to build better systems of care. The NHSC helps medically underserved communities recruit and retain primary care clinicians, including dental and mental/behavioral health professionals, to serve in their community.

The Primary Care Office is the identified liaison for Massachusetts with the NHSC and participates in the approval process by assessing new applicant sites and health professionals. The PCO also offers technical assistance for sites seeking to become NHSC placement sites and when appropriate, identifying sites eligible for NHSC placement in high-need communities.

National Health Service Corps Scholarship Program

- Full-time students enrolled or attending fully accredited U.S. allopathic or osteopathic medical schools are eligible to apply
- Participants receive payment of tuition and fees, books, supplies and equipment for up to 4 years of education, and a monthly stipend
- Each year of received support requires 1 year of service in an approved practice site, located in a federally designated Health Professional Shortage Area (HPSA)
- Minimum service commitment of two years, after completion of residency
- Massachusetts has approximately 15-25 NHSC Scholars each year
- Applications postmarked after the deadline will not be accepted
- Massachusetts had 34 Scholars practicing in HPSAs as of March 2011

Website: <http://nhsc.bhpr.hrsa.gov/applications/scholarship/>

NHSC Toll Free Number: 1-800-221-9393

MDPH Primary Care Office Contact for technical assistance:

Nicole.Watson@state.ma.us or 617-624-6051

National Health Service Corps Loan Repayment Program

- Fully trained allopathic or osteopathic primary care physicians
- Must agree to provide full-time primary care services in an approved NHSC practice site located in a federally designated Health Professional Shortage Area (HPSA)
- Funding preference given to applicants serving in HPSAs of greatest need (based on the HPSA scores; the higher the score, the higher the need)
- Requires a two year commitment, with opportunities to extend contract beyond two years
- Amounts up to \$60,000 available for the first two years of service based on qualifying educational loans
- Amounts up to \$170,000 for a five-year commitment.
- Massachusetts had 192 NHSC loan re-payers as of March 2011

Applications: <http://nhsc.bhpr.hrsa.gov/applications/lrp/>

Qualifying facilities: <http://nhsc.bhpr.hrsa.gov/jobs/>

NHSC Toll Free Number: 1-800-221-9393

MDPH Primary Care Office Contact for technical assistance:

Nicole.Watson@state.ma.us or 617-624-6051

Scholarship for Disadvantaged Students

- Applicants must apply for this scholarship at the student financial aid office of the school where he or she intends to be enrolled
- Students must be enrolled full-time in a health professions programs, from disadvantaged background, and be a U.S. citizen, national, or lawful permanent resident
- An individual from a disadvantaged background is defined as one who comes from an environment that has inhibited the individual from obtaining the knowledge, skill, and abilities required to enroll in and graduate from a health professions school, or from a program providing education or training in an allied health profession; or comes from a family with an annual income below a level based on low income thresholds according to family size published by the U.S. Bureau of Census, adjusted annually for changes in the Consumer Price Index, and adjusted by the Secretary, HHS, for use in health professions and nursing programs

- Participating schools determine need and do not provide scholarships that exceed the cost of attendance (tuition, reasonable educational and living expenses)

Website and Application:

<http://www.hrsa.gov/loanscholarships/scholarships/disadvantageded.html>

Loans for Disadvantaged Students

- Applicants must apply for this scholarship at the student financial aid office of the school where he or she intends to be enrolled and be a U.S. citizen, national or lawful permanent resident of the United States
- The program provides long-term, low-interest rate loans to full-time, financially needy students from disadvantaged backgrounds, to pursue a degree in allopathic medicine and osteopathic medicine
- Participating schools are responsible for selecting loan recipients, making reasonable determinations of need, and providing loans which do not exceed the cost of attendance (tuition, reasonable educational expenses and reasonable living expenses)
- An individual from a disadvantaged background is defined as one who comes from an environment that has inhibited the individual from obtaining the knowledge, skill and abilities required to enroll in and graduate from a health professions school, or from a program providing education or training in an allied health profession; or comes from a family with an annual income below a level based on low income thresholds according to family size published by the U.S. Bureau of Census, adjusted annually for changes in the Consumer Price Index, and adjusted by the Secretary, HHS, for use in health professions and nursing programs

Website and Application:

<http://www.hrsa.gov/loanscholarships/loans/disadvantaged.html>

Federal Primary Care Loans

- Potential applicants must apply for this scholarship at the student financial aid office of the school (allopathic or osteopathic schools of medicine) where you are or intend to be enrolled
- The Primary Care Loan program provides long-term, low interest rate loans to full-time, financially needy students to pursue a degree in allopathic or osteopathic medicine
- Recipients must enter and complete residency training in primary care within four years after graduation and practice in primary care for the life of the loan
- Interest rate is 5 percent and begins to accrue following a one year grace period after you cease to be a full-time student

- Applicants must be a U.S. citizen, national, or lawful permanent resident of the United States
- The maximum award for first- and second-year students is cost of attendance (including tuition, educational expenses, and reasonable living expenses). Amounts beyond this may be awarded to third- and fourth-year students

Website and Application: <http://bhpr.hrsa.gov/DSA/pcl.htm>

Army National Guard Healthcare Professional Loan Repayment

Healthcare providers can receive up to \$50,000 in loan repayment assistance by agreeing to a three-year service commitment with the National Guard. Qualifying specialties include preventive medicine, psychiatry, internal medicine, family practice, orthopedic surgeon, emergency physician, general dentist and physician assistant. The HPLRP pays a maximum of \$20,000 toward your qualified student loan for the first two years, with the final \$10,000 paid in your final year.

Contact: Joseph M. Guerriero at jmgue@beld.net

Website: <http://www.il.ngb.army.mil/Recruiting/amedd/hplrp.htm>