

# The National Health Service Corps (NHSC)

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## NHSC Programs

Institute of Medicine

Workshop

HIV HRS ISSUES Overseas

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*Bureau of Health Professions*

*National Health Service Corps*

# The National Health Service Corps (NHSC)

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The NHSC is committed to improving the health of the Nation's underserved:

- Uniting communities in need with caring health professionals
- Supporting communities' efforts to build better systems of care

# NHSC Is Composed of

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Clinicians and  
communities  
dedicated to  
serving the  
underserved.

# 30 Years of Making a Difference

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- **Over 24,500 dedicated primary health care clinicians placed in Health Professional Shortage Areas (HPSAs).**
- **Currently, over 3,600 NHSC clinicians serve in rural and urban communities nationwide, serving 5 million people.**



# NHSC - Today

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- 53 million people still lack access to quality health care in the United States.
- President Bush has declared the NHSC a “Presidential initiative” recognizing our importance to expand direct access to healthcare for those who need it most.
- Now couldn’t be a better time to join the NHSC and make a difference in a community that needs you!

# Clinicians in the NHSC

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- Dedicated to service
- Culturally competent
- Community responsive
- Serve on interdisciplinary teams with clinicians who share a commitment to improving the health of the underserved
- Receive support and assistance from the NHSC throughout their education, training and career

# Clinicians in the NHSC

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Represent a variety of disciplines:

- Primary Care Physicians
- Primary Care Nurse Practitioners
- Physician Assistants
- Certified Nurse Midwives
- Dentists
- Dental Hygienists
- Mental and Behavioral Health Professionals

# Sites in the NHSC

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- Located in federally designated HPSAs
- Frontier, rural and “inner city” urban settings
- Treat everyone regardless of their ability to pay
- Community Based Practices - including community health centers, migrant health centers, private practices, rural health clinics, Indian Health Service sites, and prisons

# How to Get Involved in Service

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The NHSC has a variety of exciting opportunities for *dedicated* students and practicing clinicians to serve the underserved:

- Scholarship Program
- Loan Repayment Programs (federal and state)
- On-Line Job Postings (“NHSC Opportunities List”)
- On campus NHSC Ambassadors/Mentors
- Student/Resident Experiences and Rotations in Community Health Program (SEARCH)
- Ready Responders

# NHSC Scholarship Program

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- Scholarships to students who commit to practicing primary care in HPSAs of greatest need upon completion of education or training.
- Period of service is 1 year for each year of scholarship support, with a 2-year minimum service commitment.
- Students choose their practice site from a list of approved sites located in areas of greatest need across the country.

# NHSC Scholarship Program

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- The Scholarship support includes:
  - Payment of tuition and fees for up to 4 years of education
  - Monthly stipend for living expenses
  - Payment of other reasonable educational expenses
- Students are supported throughout their education, training and service through NHSC staff in Washington, DC and on campus NHSC Ambassadors.

# Scholarship - Who is Eligible?

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U.S. citizens enrolled or accepted for enrollment in a U.S., fully accredited:

- Allopathic or Osteopathic Medical School
- Dental School
- Family Nurse Practitioner Program (master's degree in nursing, post-master's or post-baccalaureate certificate)
- Nurse-Midwifery Program (master's degree in nursing, postmaster's or post-baccalaureate certificate)
- Physician Assistant Program (certificate, associate, baccalaureate, or master's program)

# NHSC Federal Loan Repayment Program

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- Repayment of educational loans for clinicians who commit to provide full-time clinical service in a HPSA of greatest need.
- Minimum 2-year service commitment.
- Clinicians secure employment at an NHSC site: Higher scoring HPSA sites are given priority for awards.
- Maximum repayment during the required initial 2-year contract is \$50,000. Opportunities to continue in the program may be available for 1 year intervals beyond the 2-year commitment.

# Loan Repayment Program -- Who is eligible?

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U.S. citizens in the following disciplines/specialties:

- **Primary Care Allopathic or Osteopathic Physicians**
- **Primary Care Nurse Practitioners**
- **Primary Care Physician Assistants**
- **Certified-Nurse midwives**
- **Dentists**
- **Dental Hygienists**
- **Clinical Psychologists, Clinical Social Workers, Licensed Professional Counselors, Marriage and Family Therapists, and Psychiatric Nurse Specialists**

# NHSC Scholarship and Federal Loan Repayment Programs -- Timeline

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- Scholarship: Applications become available in January, and are due to the NHSC the last Friday in March. Awards are announced in late summer.
- Loan Repayment: Applications are accepted from winter to spring, with all awards finalized by late summer.

# NHSC State Loan Repayment Program

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- NHSC grants funds directly to States to operate their own loan repayment programs.
- Primary care health professionals who are providing full-time clinical services in a facility located in a HPSA are eligible.
- Eligibility requirements and benefits vary from state to state.

# On-line Job Postings: “NHSC Opportunities List”

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- The “NHSC Opportunities List” is a valuable resource to health professionals seeking jobs in underserved communities nationwide.
- “Profiles” of employment sites will be forthcoming which will assist candidates in their search for the “right fit.”

# On Campus Ambassador Program

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- The On Campus NHSC Ambassador Program assists the NHSC in developing the next generation of primary care clinicians dedicated to serving the underserved.
- NHSC Ambassadors identify and prepare students and NHSC Scholars for service to underserved populations.

# Student/Resident Experiences and Rotations in Community Health Program (SEARCH)

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Student opportunities to work with underserved communities by:

- Establishing preventative health programs
- Assisting clinicians in their practices
- Working with local health departments

# NHSC Ready Responders

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- Commissioned Officers in the U.S. Public Health Service
- Serve in the most medically underserved communities in America
- Tour of duty- up to 3 years
- Respond to regional and national medical emergencies

# NHSC Assistance to Communities

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In addition to the programs the NHSC offers to students and clinicians, the NHSC works with communities to recruit and retain primary care clinicians by:

- Providing technical assistance to become an NHSC Site.
- Identifying resources and strategies to flourish.
- Developing academic and community partnerships for student experiences and rotations in underserved areas.

# NHSC - Presidential Initiative

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- The NHSC and the Community Health Centers program are the foundation of President Bush's strategy to expand direct access to healthcare to those who need it the most.
- Since 2001, the NHSC budget has increased by about 37% and the field strength has expanded by about 53%.

# NHSC - Presidential Initiative

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- To demonstrate his continuing commitment, President Bush's FY 2005 budget proposal includes an increase of almost \$35 million.
- Budget increases mean more opportunities for clinicians to practice in underserved areas!

# Expanded Opportunities

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*“The NHSC has served millions of people, and expanding this program will help even more uninsured individuals and those in underserved areas to get the health care they need.”*

**Tommy Thompson**

**Secretary,**

**U.S. Department of Health and Human Services**

# Celebrate the Commitment

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If you are interested in making a commitment to serving the underserved, join us.

*Become one of America's Health Care Heroes!*

# To Learn More

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For more information on NHSC and its programs:

- Call our toll-free helpline at **1-800-221-9393**
- Visit our Web site at *<http://nhsc.bhpr.hrsa.gov>*