



Primary Care, Mental/Behavioral Health, and Dental Care Provider Recruitment & Retention through Loan Repayment Programs

Primary Care Office • August 2024

Program Description

The Connecticut Department of Public Health's (DPH) Primary Care Office (PCO) supports Local, State, and Federal resources by contributing to primary care service delivery and workforce development in the state.

Recruit & Retain Critical Health Care Providers in Connecticut

The National Health Service Corps (NHSC) is a program of the federal Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), which is the focal point for providing health care services to underserved and vulnerable populations. The NHSC helps medically underserved communities recruit and retain primary care clinicians, including dental and mental health professionals, by offering eligible providers student loan repayment in exchange for service in Health Professional Shortage Areas (HPSAs).

The PCO supports the NHSC by reviewing applications for new and renewed provider sites and referring critical health professionals to work in designated shortage areas. The PCO oversees the submission of HPSA Applications for Connecticut to HRSA. Current HPSAs can be found at <https://data.hrsa.gov/tools/shortage-area/hpsa-find>.

Funding from the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) has enabled the NHSC to expand its programs to provide access to, and improve quality of, primary health care in rural and urban federally designated HPSAs. For more information, please visit the NHSC website at <https://nhsc.hrsa.gov/>.

The PCO also leads support for the Connecticut Student Loan Repayment Program (SLRP), which is a state-based version of NHSC. SLRP is more flexible in its eligibility requirements and is currently administered by the University of Connecticut Area Health Education Center (AHEC). More information on this program can be found at <https://www.ctslrp.org/>.

RECRUITMENT & RETENTION EFFORTS:

- **Currently, 359 primary medical care, mental/behavioral health, and dental care providers are working in underserved communities throughout Connecticut — in small rural towns and in the most distressed inner-city neighborhoods within designated Health Professional Shortage Areas (HPSAs).**
- **87% of all NHSC members continue to work in underserved communities after completing their service obligation.**
- **The PCO Administers the Conrad-30 J1 Visa Waiver Programs, providing an avenue for International Medical Graduates to practice in Connecticut in Health Professional Shortage Areas.**

