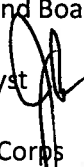




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DATE: August 24, 2009
TO: Tribal Health Directors and Board Delegates
FROM: Jim Roberts, Policy Analyst 
SUBJECT: National Health Service Corps

We have received a clarification on the issue of National Health Service Corps (NHSC) member's service provisions. The following explains the clarification, which has been provided by Health Resource Services Administration (HRSA).

To be eligible to recruit NHSC members, it is necessary to be designated as a Health Professional Shortage Area (HPSA) either population based or geographic area.

Federally recognized tribes and their respective reservations currently have an automatic designation as a HPSA (population). However, it was previously understood that in order to receive a NHSC member, the respective tribes were also required to complete an application for HPSA designation (even though they had the automatic designation), to receive a "score".

Officials from the HRSA Associate Administrator for Clinician Recruitment and Service have explained that given the current health professional needs and the additional influx of funds into the NHSC budget, that the majority of HPSAs will be able to increase their workforce with NHSC members. This includes tribes, **who do not need to complete the forms to receive a HPSA score to qualify to receive a NHSC member.**

As a result of the population based HPSA designation, tribal providers may restrict their services to their beneficiaries. An additional clarification has been provided from Mr. Michael Berry, HRSA Headquarters as follows:

- "This is a time-limited offer. We will be making ARRA-funded LRP awards in cycles, and we believe the first few cycles we will make awards to all qualified applicants regardless of score. When we get to the last of the funding in 2010 however, we will make awards based on HPSA score because at that point we will have more applicants than we can fund. So if the tribal facilities don't want to get scored, and are going with their auto-HPSA designation, they need to get in early."
- "Even if they don't want to be scored, they still have to submit a NHSC Recruitment and Retention Application to get a vacancy posted on the NHSC Jobs Opportunity List. We will not make an award unless the clinician is matched to an approved vacancy."

I want to extend a personal thank you to Dr. Linda Frizzell here at the Board who worked on this issue, which led to this decision by HRSA. If you should have any questions concerning this determination, feel free to contact me at (503) 228-4185 or email at jroberts@npaihb.org.