

# Shortage Designation Project

## Updating Geographic, Population and Other Facility Health Professional Shortage Area (HPSA) Designations

Throughout the U.S., there are geographic areas, populations, and facilities with a shortage of primary care, dental and mental health providers and services. The Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) and State Primary Care Offices (PCOs) work together using public, private, and state-provided data to determine when such a shortage qualifies for designation as a Health Professional Shortage Area (HPSA).

**The Shortage Designation Project** began in 2013 as an effort to modernize the shortage designation process. This initiative gives greater transparency, accountability, and parity to the HPSA designation and scoring process. *The project does not involve any changes to the criteria or methodology for designating HPSAs.*

### National Shortage Designation Update

One component of the Shortage Designation Project is the updating of existing geographic, population, and some facility HPSA designations using national, standardized data sets along with data provided by PCOs. We are calling this the National Shortage Designation Update. The update is currently anticipated for July 2017. **Automatically designated (Auto) HPSAs will not be included in this update.**

### Impact Analysis

To prepare for the National Shortage Designation Update, HRSA is performing a series of tests of the Shortage Designation Management System (SDMS) using data captured at a single point in time. The resulting impact analyses are intended as planning and information tools to help State PCOs prioritize their work and prepare their stakeholders for any changes that may occur with the National Shortage Designation Update. Impact analysis results are not published or used to make federal program decisions.

The latest impact analysis, using data available in SDMS on March 31, 2017, indicates that some HPSAs may no longer meet the eligibility criteria for designation and may be proposed for withdrawal. Among those that remain designated, a variety of scenarios may play out with scores increasing, decreasing, or staying the same. HPSAs that are proposed for withdrawal are officially de-designated with the annual publication of a Federal Register Notice. The earliest these HPSAs would be de-designated is in 2018.

### Automatically Designated (Auto) HPSAs

**Auto-HPSAs will not be included in the National Shortage Designation Update planned for July and have not been included in the impact analyses. HRSA has convened an Auto-HPSA Working Group, which includes representatives from all Auto-HPSA facility types, to identify possible approaches to updating Auto-HPSAs.**

### Work with Your State PCO

- Provider data have the greatest influence on impact analysis results.
- State PCOs are responsible for reviewing and revising their provider data, which in some circumstances may have a significant effect on future impact analyses.
- State PCOs are continuously reviewing and revising provider data nationwide.

The Auto-HPSA Working Group has proposed a number of Auto-HPSA update options for HRSA's consideration. HRSA and stakeholders agree that:

- Auto-HPSAs need to be updated using data that reflects the current need.
- The manual process in place today is unsustainable.

The timeline for updating Auto-HPSAs will be revisited and discussed further with stakeholders. Until a new approach is implemented, Auto-HPSA facilities may continue to request a score or rescore by emailing HRSA's Shortage Designation Branch at [SDB@hrsa.gov](mailto:SDB@hrsa.gov).

#### Get to Know Your State PCO

Please contact your State PCO to learn more about the National Shortage Designation Update and its potential impact on your state's HPSA designations and scores. PCOs are responsible for reviewing and revising their provider data, which in some circumstances may have a significant effect on future impact analyses.

Prior to the National Shortage Designation Update, HRSA has two additional test runs planned to reflect State PCOs' revisions to provider data. State PCOs may continue to create new HPSAs or revise existing HPSAs throughout this process.