

# Government of the District of Columbia

## Department of Health

Community Health Administration  
Primary Care Bureau



### Information Sheet on DC's Updated HPSAs and MUA/Ps

The Federal government has granted approval of the District's applications for re-designation of 17 of the District's current and formerly expired Health Professional Shortage Area (HPSA) and Medically Underserved Area/Population (MUA/P) designations. The new designations include expansions to include areas that were previously excluded, higher scores that improve the District's ability to compete for Federal resources, and a sharper focus on the needs of the District's low-income populations.

#### What is a Shortage Area?

HPSAs and MUA/Ps are used by the Federal government to recognize shortages of health care providers for geographic areas, populations or facilities and to prioritize the allocation of Federal resources to address these shortages. Whereas MUA/Ps refer only to Primary (medical) Care shortages, HPSAs can refer to shortages in any of three disciplines: Primary Care, Mental Health and Dental, and a single area can be designated as a HPSA for one, two or all three of the disciplines.

HPSA determinations are based on population-to-provider ratios, demographic indicators associated with under-service (e.g. poverty rate, infant mortality rate, fertility rate, etc.) and the availability of sources of care in surrounding areas. A shortage designation can refer to a gross shortage of providers available to the overall population in an area (i.e. a "geographic" HPSA or MUA) or a net shortage of providers available to a specific population in an area (i.e. a "population" HPSA or MUP).

#### Why are Shortage Designations Important for Washington DC?

HPSA designations are the basis for eligibility for over 30 Federal programs including, in DC, the National Health Service Corps (NHSC), the J-1 Visa Waiver Program, and the District's Health Professional Loan Repayment Program (HPLRP) workforce programs. Collectively, these programs assist with recruiting and retaining primary care providers to practice in underserved areas and with underserved populations. For more information on these provider incentive programs, please visit the [website of the Primary Care Bureau](#) of the DC Department of Health's Community Health Administration or call 202-442-9168.

Geographic HPSAs are also the basis for eligibility for the Medicare Physician Bonus and the Medicare Surgical Bonus programs that provide enhanced payments to physicians providing

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services in geographic HPSAs. For more information on the Medicare Physician and Surgical Bonus programs, please visit: <http://www.cms.gov/Medicare/Medicare-Fee-for-Service-Payment/HPSAPSAPhysicianBonuses/index.html?redirect=/hpsapsaphysicianbonuses/>.

MUAs/MUPs are used as the basis of eligibility for the Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC) and FQHC Look-Alike programs administered by the Health Resources and Services Administration. Community and/or non-profit health centers that participate in these programs receive benefits including, but not limited to, enhanced Medicaid reimbursement, access to the 340B Drug Pricing Program, and Federal Tort Claims Act medical malpractice coverage.

### What Are the Updated HPSAs and MUA/Ps?

The following is a list of the District’s updated designations and related information. More detailed information can be found at the Federal [HPSAFind.hrsa.gov](http://HPSAFind.hrsa.gov) website.

### HPSA Designations

RELATED DISCIPLINE	HPSA NAME AND ID NUMBER (#)	HPSA TYPE	HPSA SCORE (RANGE: 0-25)	CHANGES TO HPSA
Primary Care	<b>East Capitol Southeast -ID# 1119991101</b>	Geographical Area	18	Includes 5 additional census tracts.
Primary Care	<b>Anacostia - ID# 1119991106</b>	Geographical Area	19	Includes 3 additional census tracts; score decreased by 1 point.
Primary Care	<b>Homeless - Downtown Washington - ID# 1119991108</b>	Population Group	19	Score increased by 6 points.
Primary Care	<b>South Capitol -ID# 1119991110</b>	Geographical Area	17	Includes 2 additional census tracts; score decreased by 2 points.
Primary Care	<b>Low Income - Brentwood - ID# 1119991113</b>	Population Group	21	Includes 9 additional census tracts; score increased by 10 points.

RELATED DISCIPLINE	HPSA NAME AND ID NUMBER (#)	HPSA TYPE	HPSA SCORE (RANGE: 0-25)	CHANGES TO HPSA
Primary Care	<b>Low Income - Columbia Heights/Ft. Totten/Takoma - ID# 1119991123</b>	Population Group	18	Transitioned from a geographic to a low-income population HPSA; name changed (formerly: Mt. Pleasant/Upper Cardozo, ID# 1119991106), includes 32 additional census tracts, score increased by 2.
Dental	<b>Homeless - Downtown D.C. - ID# 6119991103</b>	Population Group	9	Score decreased by 7.
Dental	<b>Low Income- Anacostia - ID# 6119991104</b>	Population Group	18	New designation for area as HPSA had expired in 1995; includes 48 census tracts.
Mental Health	<b>Anacostia - ID# 7119991101</b>	Geographical Area	19	Includes an additional 7 census tracts; score increased by 3.

### MUA and MUP Designations

MUA/P NAME AND ID NUMBER (#)	MUA/P TYPE	SCORE (RANGE: 0-100)	CHANGES TO MUA/P
<b>East Capitol Southeast - ID# 00497</b>	Geographical Area (MUA)	55.8	Includes 12 additional census tracts; score increased by 14.8 points, formerly referenced as DC Service Area-00497 (Ward 7).
<b>Homeless - Downtown Washington - ID# 00498</b>	Population Group (MUP)	59.1	Includes 9 additional census tracts; score increased by 4.1 points, formerly referenced as DC Service Area 00498 (Wards 1, 2, 5, 6).

<b>MUA/P NAME AND ID NUMBER (#)</b>	<b>MUA/P TYPE</b>	<b>SCORE (RANGE: 0-100)</b>	<b>CHANGES TO MUA/P</b>
<b>South Capitol – ID# 00499</b>	Geographical Area (MUA)	55.6	Includes 2 additional census tracts; score increased by 2.5 points, formerly referenced as DC Service Area 00499 (Ward 6).
<b>Northwest - ID # 00500</b>	Geographical Area (MUA)	57.1	Formerly referenced as DC Service Area 00500 (Ward 3).
<b>D C Service Area - ID # 00502</b>	Geographical Area (MUA)	61.8	N/A
<b>Anacostia - ID # 07617</b>	Geographical Area (MUA)	53.5	Includes 3 additional census tracts including tracts from former Anacostia - ID # 00503; score increased by 4.8 points
<b>Low Income - Brentwood - ID# 07855</b>	Population Group (MUP)	57	Transitioned from a MUA to a MUP; ID# changed (formerly DC Service Area - #07297 Brentwood (Ward 5), includes 10 additional census tracts.
<b>Low Income - Columbia Heights/Ft. Totten/Takoma – ID# 07861</b>	Population Group (MUP)	61.1	Transitioned from a MUA to a MUP; name and ID# changed (formerly: DC Service Area ID 07368), includes 36 additional census tracts, score increased by 1.8 points.

### **How Have the District’s HPSAs and MUA/Ps Changed?**

Changes that the updated HPSA and MUA/P designations may have undergone include:

- Changes to the shortage area’s boundaries (i.e. census tracts either added or removed from the designation)
- Changes in type of designation (i.e. geographic vs. population)
- Changes to the area’s score (scores indicate the area’s degree of shortage on a scale of 1-25 with 25 indicating the greatest shortage)

A total of 51 census tracts were newly designated as Primary Care shortage areas, 7 census tracts were newly designated as Mental Health shortage areas, and 48 census tracts were re-designated as Dental shortage areas. The census tracts were added primarily by extending the boundaries of existing designations. The dental census tracts were added by re-designating and expanding the boundaries of a HPSA that had previously expired.

Out of the total 17 HPSAs and MUA/Ps, 8 are population-based, and 9 are geographic-based. Previously, 5 of the District's HPSAs/MUAs were population-based and 13 were geographic-based. The increase in population HPSAs indicates that there are sufficient numbers of providers serving the general population in these designation areas, but that there is still a shortage of providers serving the low-income and/or homeless populations in these areas.

A total of 10 designations saw increases in their designation scores (indicating a greater degree of shortage) while 3 saw decreases in their scores (indicating a lower degree of shortage). Increases in scores often accompanied transitions from geographic to population HPSA/MUA designations, since different numerators and denominators were used in the calculations.

### **What Accounts for the Changes?**

The changes in the District's designations can be attributed to both demographic and/or delivery system changes and/or changes in the assessment methodology and available data. The current round of updates represents the first time that the designation process was executed electronically and that it entailed the linking and analysis of multiple datasets including: licensure data from the District's Health Regulation and Licensing Administration (HRLA), Medicaid claims data from the District's Department of Health Care Finance (DHCF), and data from detailed DOH-administered surveys.

In addition to partners at DOH/HRLA and DHCF, two community partners – CC AHEC and DCPCA - assisted with the Bureau's survey administration, and the Primary Care Bureau is grateful for their assistance in this effort. The District's community health centers and Providence Hospital were also instrumental in providing data on their providers, and the Bureau extends its thanks to these community partners as well.

The survey process involved administering a HPSA survey by phone, by email, and by mail to each eligible primary care physician, psychiatrist and dentist practicing in the District – approximately 3,000 providers. In addition, the Primary Care Bureau utilized data from the Board of Medicine's licensure renewal physician workforce survey to fill in gaps in data.

The Primary Care Bureau compiled data from all sources into comprehensive provider datasets that were then uploaded into the electronic Application Submission and Processing System (ASAPS) maintained by the Federal government. Recognizing that there are still gaps in the data that must be filled in order to have the most accurate HPSA/MUA analyses possible, the Primary Care Bureau continues to update the provider datasets using data from DHCF and HRLA as they become available.

HPSA designations are based only on data available to the Primary Care Bureau at the time of analysis. To ensure the accuracy of the designations, the Bureau encourages its government partners, community partners and local providers to respond to requests for information related to HPSA and MUA/P designations, to share necessary data as requested, and to ensure

that data is accurate. HPSAs must be re-assessed and re-designated every three-four years.

### **How Do the Updated HPSA Designations Impact DC Providers?**

Most of the changes to the updated HPSAs expand eligibility and/or increase the competitiveness of DC providers for Federal and local programs geared at increasing access to care for the underserved.

Providers located in newly designated census tracts are now eligible for the programs highlighted above.

Providers located in areas whose scores have decreased may become less competitive for Federal resources. In FY12, only providers located in HPSAs with scores that have fallen below 16 will be impacted. Providers in HPSAs with scores below 16 will no longer be eligible to hire providers from the National Health Service Corps (NHSC) Scholars Program. Providers located in HPSAs with scores that have fallen below 13 will not be eligible for the NHSC's higher rate of loan repayment that is available through the NHSC Loan Repayment Program. There is an approximate \$20,000 difference in the two rates.

Finally, any primary care providers and surgical providers located in HPSAs that transitioned from "geographic" to "low-income population" HPSA types **will no longer be eligible to receive bonuses under the Medicare Physician and Surgical Bonus programs as of December 31, 2012.** Despite a FOIA request to Highmark, the District's Medicare Fiscal Intermediary, the DOH has not been able to determine the number of providers that are currently receiving bonuses through these programs and the amount of revenue these bonuses represent. As stated above, a transition from a "geographic" to a "population" HPSA or MUA/P indicates that whereas previously there was a gross shortage of providers for the population in the area, there is now only a net shortage of providers serving a specific (e.g. low-income/Medicaid-eligible, homeless) population in the area. This distinction provides the DOH with important information for targeting access-to-care expansion efforts.

### **What is the District Doing to Minimize Shortages?**

The District has been contributing significantly to expanding services in the District's underserved areas, including over \$90 million for the construction of new health care sites and approximately \$3 million in to the District's loan repayment program (HPLRP) that assists with recruiting and retaining primary care, mental health and dental providers to serve in

underserved areas. In addition the DOH provides operational support for 9 community (CHCs) and school-based health centers (SBHCs) to ensure access to care in underserved areas – primarily Wards 5, 7 and 8 – of the city. The DOH anticipates that these long-term and immediate investments in expanding access to care will result in lower HPSA scores and fewer HPSA designations (i.e. fewer shortages) in the future. In the meantime, the higher HPSA scores make the District's providers more competitive for Federal resources.

## **Who Can I Get More Information on HPSAs and MUA/Ps**

The Primary Care Bureau within the Department of Health's Community Health Administration (CHA) is responsible for the designation process. For more information on the District's shortage designations, please visit the Primary Care Bureau's HPSA and MUA pages on the DOH website or call (202) 442-5892. For general information on shortage designation, please visit the web page of HRSA's Office of Shortage Designation at: <http://bhpr.hrsa.gov/shortage/>.

To determine whether you are located in a HPSA, please go to [HPSAfind.hrsa.gov](http://HPSAfind.hrsa.gov) and enter your facility's address for a listing of the HPSAs and MUA/Ps in which your site is located.