Addressing the Health Needs of Underserved Areas in New York State

Presentation to the CHCANYS Clinical Leadership Forum, May 4, 2007
Main Topics

- Underserved Areas
- Current programs to address health needs in underserved areas
Types of Underserved Areas

• **Federal:**
  – Health professional shortage areas (HPSAs)
  – Medically underserved areas or populations (MUA/Ps)

• **State:** Regents Shortage Areas
HPSAs - Three configurations

- **Geographic** - entire area designated
- **Population** - only selected populations within area designated
- **Facility** - facility only designated
- Used to determine eligibility for loan repayment and J-1 waiver programs.
HPSA/Underserved Facts

- **Primary Care** - 64 geographic or population HPSAs in NYS now; about 3.3 million people residing in these HPSAs;
- **Dental** – 30 HPSAs;
- **Mental health** – 25 HPSAs;
- 36 HPSAs located in **urban** areas; 83 in **rural or mostly rural** areas
- 13.5 percent of NYS’s 19 million (2.6 million) residents had no health insurance coverage at any time in 2005
Determinants of HPSA status

- Must be “rational service area”
- Minimum ratio of population to provider in area:
  - primary care provider FTE = at least 3,000:1
  - dental provider = at least 4,000:1
  - psychiatrist = at least 25,000:1
- Health services in contiguous areas must be inaccessible to HPSA population.
MUA/MUP facts

• Based on Index of Medical Underservice (IMU) for area, consisting of:
  – Population below poverty;
  – Elderly population
  – Infant mortality and
  – Primary care MD : population ratio
• Score of 62 or less qualifies
• Used to identify locations eligible for federal funding of Community Health Centers (FQHCs) and “lookalikes”
Regents shortage areas

• Include all current HPSAs (not dental)
• Also include:
  – OMH, OMRDD, Corrections
  – Counties determined as shortages for selected medical specialties;
  – Hospitals and other facilities.
• Approved annually by NYS Regents
• Used for limited MD license and NYS loan repayment/scholarship program eligibility
Programs to address practitioner shortages in underserved areas

- **National Health Service Corps** scholarship and loan repayment (HPSAs only) – about $31 million available annually (U.S.)
- New York State **Regents Loan Forgiveness** (Regents shortage areas) - $800,000 annually
- **J-1 visa waivers** (HPSA/MUA/Ps only)
- **Limited medical licenses** (Regents shortage areas)
- **Limited dental licenses** (Dental HPSAs)
- **Medicare/Medicaid incentives** (HPSAs)
National Health Service Corps

• Scholarship program
  – Benefits for up to 4 years of education in allopathic or osteopathic medical school;
  – Payment of tuition and fees (tax-free);
  – Payment of other reasonable educational expenses (books, supplies, and equipment);
  – Must complete residency programs in family medicine, general pediatrics, general internal medicine, OB/GYN; Psychiatry.
National Health Service Corps (continued)

- Scholarship program (cont’d)
  - Must serve one year in a high-need HPSA for every year of scholarship assistance;
  - Must agree to serve all patients regardless of ability to pay;
  - Penalties for non-fulfillment of obligation;
  - Applications due end of March each year.
National Health Service Corps (continued)

• Loan Repayment Program
  – Must be allopathic or osteopathic physician in family medicine, general pediatrics, general internal medicine, general psychiatry, or OB/GYN;
  – No federal debt or existing service commitment;
  – Serve 40+ hours a week in clinical practice;
  – Provide primary care service in a HPSA for 2 years;
  – Be a U.S. citizen with a valid, unrestricted license and/or certificate;
  – Must agree to serve all patients regardless of ability to pay.
National Health Service Corps (continued)

- Loan Repayment Program (continued)
  - Maximum repayment during initial 2-year contract is $25,000 each year.
  - Eligible to continue loan repayment beyond 2 years, 1 year at a time, based on qualifying educational loans;
  - One-year amendments awarded for a maximum of $35,000 per year.
  - Applications due end of March
New York State Regents Loan Forgiveness

• United States citizen or permanent resident and live in New York State;
• New York State medical license;
• Residency program completed within five years preceding award (or plan to complete residency training prior to award) in family practice, pediatrics, internal medicine, OB/GYN, or psychiatry;
• Not a recipient of any other loan repayment programs.
New York State Regents Loan Forgiveness (continued)

- Up to $10,000 annually for up to two years with maximum of $40,000 (may be taxable);
- Must agree to practice medicine in Regents shortage area 35+ hours per week;
- Must agree to serve all patients regardless of ability to pay.
J-1 waivers (federal program)

• Non-U.S. medical graduates from non-U.S. medical schools given “J-1” visas to complete residencies in U.S.;
• Must return home for 2 years before “green card” issued or get waiver.
• “Interested Gov’t Agencies” can issue waivers of J-1 home residency requirement – NYSDOH, ARC are among agencies operating in NYS;
• MD agrees to practice medicine full time, or serve populations residing, in HPSAs/MUAs/MUPs for 3 years;
• Competitive “State 30” application due end of November;
• 30 “State 30” waivers recommended annually in March - 35+ applications received annually;
• Primary care and specialist MDs eligible for “State 30”.
Limited medical licenses

- Under NYS law, non-U.S. citizens who have successfully met all requirements can apply for “limited” medical licenses;
- These licenses allow MDs to practice medicine only in Regents-designated shortage areas or facilities;
- Can serve on limited license for up to 9 years, providing MD is “actively” seeking green card.
Limited dental licenses

- Under NYS law, non-U.S. citizens who have successfully met all requirements can apply for “limited” dental licenses;
- These licenses allow dentists and hygienists to practice in federally-designated dental shortage areas;
- Can serve on limited license for up to 9 years, providing practitioner is “actively” seeking green card.
Who’s serving in underserved areas in NYS?

• National Health Service Corps – 203, of whom 97 are MDs or DOs;
• Regents Loan Forgiveness – 157 MDs and DOs;
• Limited Medical License/Visa waiver - 844, of whom 166 began working on J-1 visa waivers.
• Limited Dental License – 48 dentists; 1 dental hygienist.
Program effectiveness

• Of 564 NHSC clinicians in FY 2003 who were eligible for retention, 442 (78%) were retained.
• Clinicians leaving their site at the end of their service obligation were asked why they were leaving.
• Of the 122 clinicians who were not retained, one or more reasons were given, including:
  – management of the site (26)
  – family needs (26)
  – salary and benefits (19)
  – workload at the site (15)
  – problems with the professional staff (3)
  – other reasons (33)
Useful Websites

• [http://hpsafind.hrsa.gov/HPSASearch.aspx](http://hpsafind.hrsa.gov/HPSASearch.aspx) for HPSA designations and scores;
• [http://muafind.hrsa.gov/index.aspx](http://muafind.hrsa.gov/index.aspx) for MUA/Ps designations;
• [http://www.ffiec.gov/Geocode/default.aspx](http://www.ffiec.gov/Geocode/default.aspx) To determine the census tract of a facility for use in HPSA determination (urban areas only);
• [http://www.highered.nysed.gov/kiap/scholarships/rplfap.htm](http://www.highered.nysed.gov/kiap/scholarships/rplfap.htm) for Regents Shortage areas and loan repayment opportunities;
• [http://www.nyhealth.gov/nysdoh/dpprd/j-1.htm](http://www.nyhealth.gov/nysdoh/dpprd/j-1.htm) J-1 visa waiver information
Contact:

• NHSC – Chuck Wiltraut, (866) 897-7872 x3013; CWiltraut@NHSCSupportCenter.net
• DOH:
  – Primary Care/Dental/Mental Health HPSAs/MUAs/MUPs - Caleb Wistar (518) 473-7019; ccw01@health.state.ny.us
  – Limited Licenses/J-1 visa waivers – Stephen Swanson (518) 473-7019; sas03@health.state.ny.us
  – All Other questions - Caleb Wistar
• SED:
  – Regents Programs - (518) 486-1319 general number.