

National Health Service Corps Loan Repayment Program Underway

REQUIREMENTS, DEADLINE FOR AWARDS ANNOUNCED

Editorial Staff

The Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) has announced that applications from qualified chiropractors who agree to serve underserved populations in Primary Care Health Professional Shortage Areas (HPSAs) will be accepted by the National Health Service Corps (NHSC) for loan repayment awards.

The NHSC is a federally funded program dedicated to serving the health needs of underserved areas of the U.S. since 1970. In 1987, Congress authorized the NHSC Loan Repayment Program, which afforded primary health-care professionals reimbursement for student loans in return for establishing and maintaining their practices in geographic areas designated by the government as "medically underserved." In 2002, Congress passed the Health Care Safety Net Improvement Act, a section of which established a "demonstration project to provide for the participation of individuals who are chiropractic doctors ... in the Loan Repayment Program."

With the recent announcement from the HRSA, doctors of chiropractic can now officially apply for service in the demonstration project and qualify for student loan repayment awards. A two-year service commitment is required, and there is no guarantee that participants in the demonstration project will have an opportunity to continue their service and loan repayments beyond the initial service period. The project will include an evaluation component "to determine whether adding chiropractors ... as permanent NHSC members would enhance the effectiveness of the NHSC."

Eligible applicants must be citizens or nationals of the United States; possess a current unrestricted license to practice as a chiropractor in the state in which they intend to practice; be negotiating or have secured employment at an eligible community site; and meet the additional eligibility requirements outlined in the application materials. Applicants also must have a doctor of chiropractic degree from a four-year chiropractic college fully accredited by the Commission on Accreditation of the Council on Chiropractic Education, and must have successfully passed the entire National Board of Chiropractic Examiners (NBCE) exam.

Loan repayment applications will be evaluated to determine the eligibility of the applicant and the applicant's priority for funding. The estimated average size of each award is \$75,000.

Application materials are available for downloading via the Web at <http://nhsc.bhpr.hrsa.gov>. Applicants may also request a hard copy of the application materials by contacting the National Health Services Corps at 1-800-221-9393. All applications must be submitted in hard-copy format. Only the original signed copy of the application is required for submission. To be considered for an award, applications must be postmarked or delivered to the NHSC no later than July 11, 2003. Completed applications must be mailed or delivered to:

Division of National
Health Service Corps
NHSC Loan Repayment Program,

c/o I.Q. Solutions
11300 Rockville Pike, Suite 801
Rockville, MD 20852

Applicants should request a legibly dated U.S. Postal Service postmark, or obtain a legibly dated receipt from a commercial carrier or the U.S. Postal Service. Private metered postmarks shall not be acceptable as proof of timely mailing. NHSC will acknowledge receipt of the application if the applicant chooses to complete the notification postcard included in the application materials.

For further information, contact:

NHSC Loan Repayment Program
12312-A Wilkins Avenue
Rockville, MD, 20852
(800) 221-9393nhsc@hrsa.gov

JULY 2003