



West Virginia Recruitment Programs

West Virginia has pioneered new approaches to educating medical and other health professions students in rural settings through the West Virginia Rural Health Education Partnership (WVRHEP). The WVRHEP was designed to increase the recruitment and retention of health care providers in rural areas by requiring students in all health disciplines to complete rural rotations. Additionally since 2001, Area Health Education Centers (AHECs) have increased opportunities for health professions education.

To support these efforts, state and federal financial incentives are coordinated through the WVRHEP Recruitment and Retention Committee and the Bureau for Public Health. Requirements, benefits, and obligations for these programs vary, but a common requirement is the practice location must be in an underserved area. Individuals may receive incentives from several state-funded programs and can serve their practice obligations concurrently.

HEALTH PROFESSIONS RECRUITMENT PROGRAM

The Division of Rural Health & Recruitment, located within the WV Department of Health and Human Resources, Bureau for Public Health, Office of Community Health Systems, provides extensive information about West Virginia practice opportunities to providers seeking placement assistance. We prepare practice opportunity profiles with information about the site's clinical environment, the community's recreational assets, economic environment, educational resources, and other characteristics unique to the area. Upon request, the provider's curriculum vitae will be circulated to those sites that are currently recruiting. Visit our web site at <http://www.wvochs.org/dr/default.aspx> to register with our office. Our placement services are free.

For information about practice opportunities, contact:

Nancy Melton, Physician Recruiter
Martha Endres, Mid-Level Recruiter
Division of Rural Health & Recruitment
350 Capitol Street, Room 515
Charleston, WV 25301-3716
304-558-4382; (Toll Free) 1-888-442-3456; (FAX) 304-558-1437
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HEALTH PROFESSIONAL SHORTAGE AREAS (HPSAs) IN RURAL WEST VIRGINIA

Statewide data is analyzed by the Division of Rural Health & Recruitment to determine areas that are eligible for HPSA designation. This information is submitted to the Shortage Designation Branch of the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA). A HPSA designation is a federal designation that identifies areas with a shortage of primary care physicians -- generally, areas with a ratio of less than one primary care physician per 3,500 population. In West Virginia, 17 of the 55 counties are designated as partial or whole-county HPSAs, based on geographic criteria. In addition, federally qualified health centers and some rural health clinics are designated HPSAs.

The State Loan Repayment Program requires participants to work in an approved site in a HPSA. State-funded programs, i.e., the Health Sciences Scholarship Program, the Recruitment and Retention Community Project, and the Medical Student Loan Program, consider additional underserved areas based on program criteria.

For information on underserved areas in West Virginia, contact:

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STATE LOAN REPAYMENT PROGRAM

This program offers repayment of educational loans to primary care physicians, nurse practitioners, physician assistants, and nurse midwives, in return for an obligation to practice in a rural, underserved area of West Virginia. The site must be public or nonprofit and located in a HPSA. The program is funded by a federal grant (50%) and state appropriation (50%).

Eligibility: Primary care physicians in family practice, general pediatrics, obstetrics/gynecology, general internal medicine, general psychiatry; and nurse practitioners, physician assistants, and certified nurse-midwives. General practice dentists also are eligible to apply,

Applicant must be a U.S. citizen with a valid, unrestricted West Virginia license and/or certificate, and must have satisfied any other state or federal service obligation prior to beginning the service obligation.

Benefits: \$40,000 for a two-year commitment. Contracts may be amended for two additional years at a rate of \$25,000 per year. This program will pay for qualified government and commercial educational loans for medical or other health professions education and reasonable living expenses.

Awards are made by the Bureau for Public Health, based on a ranking of community need and availability of health professionals.

Obligation: Recipients of loan repayment must sign a contract to practice full-time for a minimum of two years at an approved site in a HPSA. Penalties apply for breach of contract.

For more information, contact:

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RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION COMMUNITY PROJECT

This program provides matching funds to communities for recruitment and retention of primary care providers. The program is funded by state appropriation.

Eligibility: Sponsors must be located in a medically underserved community, such as a Health Professional Shortage Area (HPSA), Medically Underserved Area (MUA), or other areas approved by the Bureau for Public Health. Sponsors must provide a full continuum of care, including arrangements for after hours and acute care, and must have an open policy to provide health services without regard to a person's ability to pay.

Eligible providers include primary care physicians in general family practice, general pediatrics, general internal medicine, psychiatry, and obstetrics/gynecology, or emergency medicine physicians and physician assistants trained in emergency medicine (only at approved facilities), primary care nurse practitioners, physician assistants, nurse-midwives, general practice dentists, or individuals in training programs in these fields. A candidate must be a U.S. citizen and must agree to meet all applicable educational, licensure, and certification requirements to practice in West Virginia.

Benefits: A grant of up to \$10,000 to the sponsor, who in return is required to provide 50 percent matching funds. Funds may be used to provide loan repayment, residency stipends, loan forgiveness, locum tenens support, or other incentives approved by the Bureau for Public Health.

Applications are accepted throughout the year, and awards are made by the Bureau for Public Health. Preference is given to sponsors supporting candidates who have received their training in West Virginia; have ties to the community; have a commitment to serve in an underserved area; or have experience in community service in an underserved area.

Obligation: Health care providers must agree to provide primary care clinical medicine full-time in an underserved area with or for the sponsor for one year for every year of funding. There is a maximum of four years of funding.

For more information, contact:

Karen Pauley, Program Coordinator

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HEALTH SCIENCES SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

This program, authorized by the West Virginia Legislature in 1995, provides a scholarship incentive for students to complete their training in primary care and practice in underserved rural areas of the state. The program is funded by state appropriation.

Eligibility: Fourth-year medical students at a West Virginia school of medicine or osteopathy who are entering primary care internships or residency programs in West Virginia; and students who are in the final year of a primary care educational program in West Virginia for nurse practitioners, physical therapists, or physician assistants, or a master's degree nursing program in West Virginia leading to a career in nursing education. In 2009, eligibility was extended to mental health disciplines. Students in clinical social work who intend to become licensed independent clinical social workers and doctoral clinical psychology students who will complete their internships in West Virginia are eligible. Although in-state residency is not a requirement, awarding preference will be given to West Virginia residents.

Benefits: \$20,000 award for medical students and \$10,000 for all other disciplines. Awards are made by the Vice Chancellor for Health Sciences, West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission, based on recommendations of an advisory committee.

Obligation: Participants must sign a contract to practice in an underserved area of the state for a minimum of two years upon completion of training. Nurse educators must teach in an approved undergraduate nursing program in the state for at least two years. The penalty for not fulfilling the service obligation is repayment of the scholarship with interest.

For more information, contact:

Laura Boone, Director of Health Sciences Programs

West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission

1018 Kanawha Blvd., East, Suite 700

Charleston, WV 25301-2827

304-558-0530; (FAX) 304-558-0532

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MEDICAL STUDENT LOAN PROGRAM

This program provides loans to needy students at schools of medicine in West Virginia. The program is funded by an annual set-aside of student tuition and fees.

Eligibility: Students must be accepted for enrollment or be enrolled full-time in a West Virginia school of medicine. They must meet designated academic standards, demonstrate financial need, and not be in default on any previous student loan.

Benefits: Maximum annual loan of \$10,000, but a lower amount may be set by participating schools. Recipients are selected annually by each school based upon eligibility criteria and the availability of funds. Students may receive renewal loans each year at the discretion of the school.

Loan forgiveness may be granted at the rate of \$10,000 for each year of full-time practice in an approved underserved area of West Virginia or in a medical specialty designated as a critical shortage field in the state.

The fields of family practice, internal medicine, pediatrics, internal medicine/pediatrics, psychiatry, obstetrics/gynecology, and general surgery are considered to be critical shortage fields. Other specialties may be approved based upon a needs assessment or from individual requests with supporting documentation of need.

Obligation: Students must sign a promissory note to repay the loans at the prevailing graduated subsidized federal Stafford interest rate in effect when the repayment period begins. This rate will apply throughout the repayment period. Payment deferments may be granted during required military service or approved additional medical training, including internships and residencies, not to exceed five years. Students may request loan forgiveness, as outlined above, from the Higher Education Policy Commission.

For more information, contact the Financial Aid Office of your medical school or contact:

Bob Long, Financial Aid Manager
Medical Student Loan Program
West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission
1018 Kanawha Boulevard, East, Suite 700
Charleston, WV 25301-2800
304-558-4618, Ext: 320; (FAX) 304-558-4622
E-mail: long@hepc.wvnet.edu

EDUCATIONAL SEED FOR PHYSICIANS (ESP)

This program, administered by the Family Medicine Foundation of West Virginia, the philanthropic arm to the West Virginia Chapter of the American Academy of Family Physicians, provides loans to medical students and is designed to help promote and encourage family physicians to practice in West Virginia.

Eligibility: Medical students in the 2nd, 3rd, and 4th year must specialize in family medicine and practice for two years in West Virginia upon completion of internships or residency training. Awards are made by the Family Medicine Foundation board, based on recommendations of a committee that includes representatives from the Foundation board, the General Federation of Women's Clubs West Virginia (which originated the ESP fund), and the medical profession.

Benefits: Loans of \$5,000 per year are awarded on the basis of need and interest in family medicine.

Obligation: Repayment of the loans is waived after the required two years of practice in the state. Physicians who do not fulfill the service agreement must repay the loans with interest.

For more information, contact:

Family Medicine Foundation of WV/ESP Fund
Post Office Box 359
Flatwoods, West Virginia 26621-0359
304-733-6485 (FAX) 304-733-6486
E-mail: fam.med.foundation@citynet.net
WEB www.fmfww.org

TULLY SCHOLARSHIP FUND

This program, administered by the Family Medicine Foundation of West Virginia, provides scholarships to medical students.

Eligibility: Medical students in the 3rd and 4th years must specialize in family medicine and practice for one year in West Virginia upon completion of internships or residency training. Awards are made by the Family Medicine Foundation board, based on recommendations of a Tully Fund Selection Committee that includes representatives from the board, the General Federation of Women's Clubs West Virginia (which originated the ESP fund), medical schools, and the medical profession.

Benefits: Scholarships of \$5,000 per year or \$10,000 total for the third and fourth years of medical school are awarded on the basis of need and interest in family medicine.

Obligation: Repayment of the loans is waived after the required one year of practice in Family Medicine in the state. Physicians who do not fulfill the service agreement must repay the loans with interest.

For more information, contact:

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