

**NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTERS**  
**Stimulus Package**  
**WORKFORCE**

**Economic Stimulus Statement:** On February 17, 2009, President Obama signed into law a massive economic stimulus measure entitled the **American Recovery and Reinvestment Act**, or “ARRA” for short. The new law, which contains more than \$787 billion in spending and tax cuts, contains several major initiatives related to Health Centers, totaling well over \$2 billion.

**Core Elements:** \$500 million for primary care workforce development, including \$300 million for the National Health Service Corps (NHSC) and \$200 million for the Title VII Health Professions and Title VIII Nurse Training Programs.

Of the \$300M for the NHSC administered by the Bureau of Clinician Recruitment and Services (BCRS), \$240M is for recruitment and \$60M for the field line to administer the program. Seventy five million of the \$300M will remain for the NHSC through September 30, 2011. Of the \$240M for recruitment, \$196M is for Loan Repayment, \$24M for the NHSC Scholarship Program (a 10% statutory requirement), and \$20M for the State Loan Repayment Program administered by HRSA’s Bureau of Health Professions (BHP).

It took 38 years to build the NHSC to the present 4,000 recipients; the ARRA doubles that in two years. As a result of the ARRA, BCRS anticipates recruiting an additional 4,200 primary care clinicians over the next two years.

On June 5, 2009, HHS announced the release of nearly \$200 million from the ARRA to support student loan repayments for primary care medical, dental and mental health clinicians who want to work at NHSC-approved sites. On June 4, 2009, at the request of the PCA Steering Committee, BCRS provided additional clarification on an interactive phone conference with (57) PCAs, NACHC staff, and HRSA Regional Offices. Within 24 hours of the new website and clinician application roll-out on June 4th, 461 clinicians logged-on and registered, 275 submitted applications, 130 submitted completed applications.

**What can the funds be used for?** Funds will not be directed to individual health centers, but health centers can take advantage of increased recruitment and retention opportunities through the NHSC.

NHSC program policy update:

- The number of health center sites eligible to receive NHSC Loan Repayment Program clinicians and the number of vacancies per site have been expanded under ARRA funding. Sites with HPSA scores 10 and above have priority for Loan Repayment Program clinicians and increased numbers of NHSC placements. See May 28, 2009, [Federal Register Notice](#) providing guidance for the new ARRA-funded site application process and for the number of vacancies/site. Due to the generosity of ARRA funding, 2009 Appropriations, and possible 2010 Appropriations, **it is anticipated that – at least for the first funding cycles – applications will be funded regardless of HPSA scores and down to 1s.**
- The NHSC Loan Repayment Program will accept clinician applications continuously from June 2, 2009, until ARRA and 2010 Appropriations funds are expended or September 30, 2010. Go to <http://nhsc.hrsa.gov/loanrepayment/> for information and the clinician application. For the NHSC

Private Practice Option Application, select Loan Repayment tab and click on Practice Assignments.

- Funding for Part-Time clinicians is expected to be available around October 2009.
- BCRS is working internally with HRSA staff to develop the capability for provisional qualification for loan repayment. At this time, BCRS envisions the ability to offer provisional qualification to persons in their last year of training who agree to practice in underserved areas. This is an important recruitment incentive that health centers could offer to primary care clinicians rotating through their centers.
- BCRS is developing a robust plan to recruit applicants which will employ a professional marketing firm, new social networking tools, and enhanced cooperation with external partners. Five HRSA Regional Offices are presently engaged in marketing assistance: Boston, Philadelphia, Kansas City, Denver, and San Francisco. NACHC has requested, but – at this point – there does not appear to be direct funding for PCA recruitment activities.
- BCRS has redesigned and simplified their website (<http://nhsc.hrsa.gov/loanrepayment/>) and increased staffing for the Clinician Hotline at 1-800-221-9393 and the Call Center at [callcenter@hrsa.gov](mailto:callcenter@hrsa.gov).

**What is the time frame for accessing resources?** Applications will be accepted continuously during June 2, 2009 - approximately September 30, 2010. It is expected that applications will be reviewed and processed within 6-8 weeks of submission of a completed application.

**What will Health Centers have to do to receive benefit of the funding?**

- Health Centers should actively recruit and assist clinicians in the application process.
- **Clinicians – employed or not yet employed – need to apply ASAP online and submit supplemental forms and documentation for a complete NHSC applications at <http://nhsc.hrsa.gov/loanrepayment/>. Applications will be funded for eligible clinicians on a first –come –first - served basis for assignment to registered sites.**

Clinicians who submitted applications in December 2008 and January 2009 do not need to reapply. BCRS will contact those who have not heard about their applications to inform them of their status and/or assist them in making their applications complete for funding. A clinician may contact BCRS directly @ 1-800-221-9393 or @ [toverby@hrsa.gov](mailto:toverby@hrsa.gov).

- **Health Center s need to have a current NHSC-approved Recruitment & Retention Assistance Application and vacancy list on file with BCRS or submit ASAP an R & R Application.** Do not wait until the March 26, 2010, deadline to submit a new application. The R & R is good for three years from the approval date and the vacancies remain approved through the third placement cycle.
- Entities wanting to provide additional data and information supporting their inclusion on the proposed final list of HPSAs and entities to receive priority in assignment of NHSC clinicians must

do so in writing no later than June 29, 2009 to Mark Pincus, Director, Division of Site and Clinician Recruitment, BCRS, 5600 Fishers Lane, Room 8-A55, Rockville, MD 20857.

**What resources are available to assist Health Centers to receive this funding?**

- Policy and distribution of funds: Susan Walter ([swalter@nachc.com](mailto:swalter@nachc.com))
- Recruitment and retention planning: Tom Curtin, MD ([tcurtin@nachc.com](mailto:tcurtin@nachc.com)) or David Stevens, MD ([dstevens@nachc.com](mailto:dstevens@nachc.com))

**Additional ARRA Workforce Funding:**

**Student/Resident Experiences and Rotations in Community Health (SEARCH) Program**

SEARCH Pre-solicitation at <http://www.FedBizOpps.gov>. Solicitation will be open full competition and posted by June 18 for July 20, 2009, response time. \$15M for next 3 years comes entirely from ARRA.

**June 19, 2009 Addendum**

**NHSC Loan Repayment Program**

- BCRS is considering PCAs' request that NHSC Site Approval Status information be provided electronically.
- NHSC clinicians have flexibility assisting with short term assignments in other locations. No prior approval is required if the time spent at the short term assignment is either less than 2 weeks or does not impact the 32 clinical hours; notify BCRS prior to the assignment. Any short term assignment over 2 weeks in length or that impacts the 32 clinical hours must be approved by Division of Scholar and Clinician prior to assignment. Contact BCRS at 301-594-4200 to notify or request approval.

**NHSC Scholarship Program**

Selections will be made beginning the end of July/early August. 450+ of 1,700 submitted were completed primary care applications. A team of 34 clinicians has reviewed half the applications and meets the week of July 1 to finish.

**SEARCH - Student/Resident Experiences and Rotations in Community Health**

[Solicitation is now online.](#) Responses are due July 20. PCAs and PCOs are listed as sources in the solicitation and received it via email.