

## Steps in Determining A Shortage of Health Professionals in an Area

Step 1: Is your community already designated as a [Health Professional Shortage Area](#) or [Medically Underserved Area](#)?

Yes- There is no further action required, unless qualifying for National Health Service Corps, Colorado Health Service Corps, Centers for Medicaid Services Medicare Incentive Payment, Federally Qualified Health Center program, J-1 Visa Waiver program or National Interest Waiver program. These are programs that require a separate application process. Visit the link for details.

No- Continue to Step 2.

Step 2: Become familiar with the types of Health Professional Shortage Areas.

1. Geographic area: These can be physical counties, census tracts or catchment areas.
2. Population groups: This typically indicates people living in the area who are lower income as defined by the Federal Poverty Guidelines.
3. Correctional Facilities: Must be public, be a medium or maximum security facility and 250+ inmates. City, county and private facilities are not eligible.
4. Facilities: Public or non-profit facilities that can demonstrate a shortage of health care services to the service population.
5. State or county mental health hospital: Must be a public facility and must have 100+ average daily inpatient census.

Step 3: Become familiar with the four components required for a Health Professional Shortage Area.

1. The area must be rational for the delivery of health services, for example, a municipality or county
2. A qualified population to provider ratio must be met or exceeded (ratios are different for geographic area, low-income population, primary care, dental health and mental health designations. Visit the Community Shortage Guide for the ratios)
3. Health care resources in contiguous areas must be shown to be over utilized, excessively distant, or otherwise inaccessible to the population of the service area
4. The nearest source of care, that is not in a HPSA, must be determined to illustrate relative isolation from care

Step 4: Contact the Primary Care Office at 303-692-2298 for detailed information on whether the possible Health Professional Shortage Area qualifies. The Primary Care Office begins with:

- Providing basic information and technical assistance on Health Professional Shortage Area designations
- Providing direction and guidance for surveying the area's or facilities health resources
- Assisting and connect with health care data necessary to complete the application evaluation
- Assuring the best possible outcome for your community

Step 5: Collect health care survey data from community in consultation with the Primary Care Office.

Step 6: Submit the data and rationale for the service area to the Primary Care Office for review and analysis. The Primary Care Office finalizes your application and submits it to the federal Shortage Designation Branch at the Health Resources and Service Administration, US Department of Health & Human Services.

[Shortage Designation Overview](#) 

[Community Guide to Shortage Designation](#) 