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## National Health Service Corps expands the primary care workforce

*Physicians to practice in communities that need them most*

The National Health Service Corps awarded more than \$9.3 million in funding for loan repayment to 78 medical students in 29 states, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico, who will serve as primary care doctors and help strengthen the health care workforce, Department of Health and Human Services Secretary Kathleen Sebelius announced today.

Made possible by the Affordable Care Act, the National Health Service Corps' Students to Service Loan Repayment Program provides financial support to fourth year primary care medical students in exchange for their service in the communities that need them most.

"This new National Health Service Corps initiative is an innovative approach to encouraging more medical students to work in primary care, and to bring more primary care doctors to communities," Secretary Sebelius said. "This is an important part of the administration's commitment to building the future health care workforce."

The Health Resources and Services Administration's (HRSA) Students to Service pilot program provides loan repayment assistance of up to \$120,000 to medical students in MD and DO programs in their last year of education in return for their commitment to practice in the communities that need them most upon completion of their primary care residency.

"The average medical school debt is often more than \$200,000," said HRSA Administrator Mary K. Wakefield, Ph.D., R.N. "The Students to Service program help relieve a tremendous debt burden, allowing them to follow their passion for primary care." These newest NHSC providers must provide three years of full-time service or six years of half-time service in designated rural and urban areas.

As a result of historic investments in the Affordable Care Act and the Recovery Act, the numbers of National Health Service Corps clinicians are at all-time highs. The number of providers serving in the Corps has nearly tripled since 2008. Today nearly 10,000 National Health Service Corps providers are providing primary care to approximately 10.4 million people at nearly 14,000 health care sites in urban, rural, and frontier areas.

For more information about NHSC programs, please visit [www.NHSC.hrsa.gov](http://www.NHSC.hrsa.gov).

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