

2025 National Shortage Designation Update (NSDU) – Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

The National Shortage Designation Update (NSDU) is the Health Resources & Services Administration (HRSA)'s periodic update of Health Professional Shortage Areas (HPSAs) and Maternity Care Target Areas (MCTAs). HRSA intends to execute an NSDU on September 23, 2025. This FAQ is intended for all HRSA stakeholders, including state, territorial, and local public health officials, to raise awareness and encourage timely preparation.

What is the NSDU?

The National Shortage Designation Update (NSDU) is a nationwide update of shortage area designations by HRSA. It ensures designations reflect the most current data for underserved areas, covering Primary Care, Dental Health, and Mental Health HPSAs, and Maternity Care Target Areas (MCTAs).

Why does the NSDU matter to state and local officials?

The update affects eligibility for workforce programs like the National Health Service Corps, Nurse Corps, and other HRSA programs. Designations are also used by Centers for Medicaid Services (CMS) and other Health and Human Services (HHS) programs to identify where health resources and personnel should be assigned. Accurate shortage area designations ensure communities receive appropriate resources and support.

What is being updated with the September 23, 2025 NSDU?

- Primary Care, Dental Health, and Mental Health HPSAs
- Maternity Care Target Areas (MCTAs)
- Designation types: Geographic, High-Need, Low-Income, and Automatically Designated Facility HPSAs

What's different about the 2025 update?

- Uses updated national source data (2023)
- Updates designations where applicable using federal criteria
- Updates HPSA and MCTA scores

What are the possible outcomes of the NSDU?

If a HPSA designation is run through the NSDU, there may be an impact on HPSA score. If the designation does not meet the regulatory criteria, the designation status may be affected.

When will the final update be released?

The final NSDU results will be published on September 23, 2025.

Will there be previews before the final release?

Yes. Update Previews (UPs) are published monthly in the Shortage Designation Management System (SDMS). These snapshots show potential changes ahead of the final update.

What are the Update Preview dates?

- UP #1 – Snapshot: March 15, Published: March 28
- UP #2 – Snapshot: April 24, Published: May 6
- UP #3 – Snapshot: June 5, Published: June 17
- UP #4 – Snapshot: July 17, Published: July 29
- UP #5 – Snapshot: August 14, Published: August 26
- UP #6 (Final) – Snapshot: September 11, Published: September 23

What happens if a designation is proposed for withdrawal after the September 23, 2025 NSDU and not updated by the next Federal Register Notice (FRN) on July 1, 2026?

If a designation is proposed for withdrawal after the September 23, 2025 NSDU and is not updated or replaced before the July 1, 2026 FRN publication, it will be officially withdrawn. As a result, eligibility for workforce programs such as the [National Health Service Corps](#) will be discontinued.

What HPSA designation types will not be affected by the September 23, 2025 NSDU?

- Geographic, High-Need, Low-Income, and Automatically Designated Facility HPSAs updated after March 15, 2025 as they already contain the most updated data
- Medicaid Eligible Population HPSAs
- Other Population HPSAs
- Territory HPSAs
- Correctional Facility HPSAs
- Other Facility HPSAs
- State/County Mental Hospital HPSAs

How can impacted stakeholders prepare for the NSDU?

Reach out to your [State Primary Care Office \[PCO\] contact](#) with any questions or concerns. Your State PCO can review each monthly Update Preview in SDMS, assess local impacts, coordinate across state agencies, and provide additional information in applications – potentially impacting a final HPSA score - if necessary.

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