

# **Reverse Impact Report: Effects of Not Funding Wyoming Healthcare Professional Loan Repayment Program**

## **Purpose**

This report intends to inform stakeholders of the potential current and future impacts to recruitment and retention of healthcare professionals in Wyoming by not funding the Wyoming Healthcare Professional Loan Repayment Program (WHPLRP). The report describes the history and past successes of WHPLRP, provides a comparison of loan repayment options available within the region (including current funding levels), describes federally-funded loan repayment programs in Wyoming and the region, and describes current healthcare provider shortages throughout Wyoming.

## **Overview**

The Wyoming Healthcare Professional Loan Repayment Program (WHPLRP) was created during the 2005 legislative session to provide educational loan repayment to physicians, dentists, and allied healthcare professionals. Allied healthcare professionals are non-physician and non-dentist clinicians requiring licensure under Title 33 of Wyoming Statutes. Wyo. Stat. § 9-2-118, physician and dentist loan repayment program, and Wyo. Stat. § 9-2-119, allied health care provider loan repayment program, allow the Wyoming Department of Health (WDH) to:

- A. Enter into agreements with physicians, dentists, and allied healthcare professionals to practice in an eligible community and accept Medicare, Medicaid, and/or KidCare eligible patients for a minimum of three (3) years;
- B. Provide educational loan repayment of up to \$30,000 per year for physicians and dentists or \$20,000 per year for allied healthcare professionals; not to exceed 100% of their outstanding educational loans;
- C. Give priority to qualified graduates of the University of Wyoming or a Wyoming community college when selecting physicians, dentists, and allied healthcare professionals for agreements.

In exchange for three years of full-time practice in an approved underserved area, selected physician and dentist applicants can receive up to \$90,000 in educational loan repayment and selected allied healthcare professional applicants can receive up to \$60,000 in educational loan repayment. Selected applicants are required to:

- A. Pay 100% of the program funds received to their educational loans;

- B. Treat Medicare, Medicaid, and KidCare eligible patients;
- C. Practice full-time for three years in an approved underserved area;
- D. Provide confirmation of A - C to WDH staff each year;
- E. Repay 100% of funds received to WDH in the event of non-compliance.

WHPLRP was funded between SFY2005 and SFY2016 through varying mechanisms. The program was funded through State General Funds from SFY2005 until SFY2010 and was reduced and transitioned to Tobacco Settlement Funds beginning in SFY2011. WHPLRP funding was eliminated beginning with the 2017-2018 biennium as a result of budget cuts.

<b>WHPLRP Funding Levels, Applications, and Awards SFY 2005 - SFY 2020</b>					
<b>Biennium</b>	<b>Total Funding</b>	<b>Funding Source</b>	<b>Applications</b>	<b>Awards</b>	<b>% Awarded</b>
2005-2006	\$1,280,000	State General Funds	132	23	17%
2007-2008	\$5,780,000	State General Funds	369	144	39%
2009-2010	\$3,000,000	State General Funds	262	59	23%
2011-2012	\$1,000,000	Tobacco Settlement Funds	203	22	11%
2013-2014	\$1,000,000	Tobacco Settlement Funds	384	23	6%
2015-2016	\$1,000,000	Tobacco Settlement Funds	365	15	4%
2017-2018	\$0	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
2019-2020	\$0	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

**Program Performance During Funding**

Between SFY2005 and SFY2016, 1,715 applications to WHPLRP were received and 286 healthcare professionals received an award under WHPLRP. Of those 286 awards, 87 were physicians, 20 were dentists, and 179 were allied healthcare professionals. Of the 179 allied healthcare professional awards, 26 were nurse practitioners, 27 were physician assistants, 46 were mental health clinicians, and 80 were other professions (registered nurses, chiropractors, pharmacists, physical therapists, etc.).

At the time of application, 114 (40%) of the 286 WHPLRP awardees weren't yet practicing in Wyoming or had been practicing in Wyoming for less than one year, and 145 (51%) were

graduates of the University of Wyoming or a Wyoming Community College. Additionally, applicants from all counties except Teton County were selected for awards.

WY Healthcare Professional Loan Repayment Program 2006 - Present													
Life of Program			Length of Time Practicing in WY at Award					WY College/University		Completion/Default Rate			
Discipline/Specialty	# Applications	# Awards	Not yet practicing **	< 1 year	1 - < 3 years	3 - 5 years	5 years or more	Yes	No	# Default/Withdrawn	% Default/Withdrawn	# Completed Obligation	% Completed Obligation
<b>Physician</b>	<b>219</b>	<b>87</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>11%</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>89%</b>
Primary Care	126	62	11	20	13	7	11	23	39	8	13%	54	87%
Psychiatry	13	8	2	4	1	1		1	7	2	25%	6	75%
Other	80	17	2	5	6	3	1	4	13			17	100%
<b>Dentist</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>5%</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>95%</b>
General	48	18	6	4	6	2		3	15	1	6%	17	94%
Other	6	2	1			1		1	1			2	100%
<b>Allied</b>	<b>941</b>	<b>179</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>113</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>11%</b>	<b>160</b>	<b>89%</b>
NP	66	26	1	12	4	4	5	18	8	4	15%	22	85%
PA	67	27	1	7	10	4	5	13	14	2	7%	25	93%
<b>Mental Health</b>	<b>179</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>15%</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>85%</b>
Other	629	80	9	17	19	15	20	51	29	6	7%	74	93%
<b>Unknown*</b>	<b>501</b>	<b>286</b>	<b>35**</b>	<b>79</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>145</b>	<b>141</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>10%</b>	<b>256</b>	<b>90%</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1715</b>	<b>286</b>	<b>35**</b>	<b>79</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>145</b>	<b>141</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>10%</b>	<b>256</b>	<b>90%</b>

\*discipline of applicants prior to SFY2009 was not tracked \*\*not yet practicing was not an option on the application prior to SFY2011.

WY Healthcare Professional Loan Repayment Program Awards by County							
County	Physician	Dentist	Other	County	Physician	Dentist	Other
Albany	5	1	12	Natrona	6	2	15
Big Horn	2	0	4	Niobrara	1	0	4
Campbell	8	2	5	Park	6	1	21
Carbon	1	0	13	Platte	0	0	3
Converse	5	1	5	Sheridan	4	0	4
Crook	2	0	2	Sublette	4	1	9
Fremont	6	1	11	Sweetwater	17	2	27
Goshen	3	0	6	Teton	0	0	0
Hot Springs	2	0	3	Uinta	4	3	9
Johnson	2	2	2	Washakie	2	2	9
Laramie	5	2	6	Weston	0	0	3
Lincoln	2	0	6				

In 2010, 183 WHPLRP awardees (all who had been awarded to date) were surveyed to gather data to determine the impact of the program in Wyoming and 150 (82%) completed the survey. From those responses, 100% of the physician respondents who considered practicing in another

state identified WHPLRP as Very Important or Important in their initial decision to practice in Wyoming. Colorado, Idaho, Montana, Nebraska, South Dakota, and Utah were adjacent states considered by physicians before deciding to practice in Wyoming. All adjacent states have a loan repayment or similar program to assist with recruitment and retention of healthcare professionals.

Between 2013 and 2016, 188 WHPLRP awardees were surveyed to determine their post-obligation retention in Wyoming. Those surveyed had been selected for award between SFY2005 and SFY2010 and had completed their obligation to WHPLRP at least three years prior to being surveyed. Of the 188 WHPLRP participants surveyed, 130 responded (60%) and 117 (90%) were still practicing full-time in their profession in Wyoming. Of the 117 still practicing in Wyoming, 108 (92%) were still practicing in the same community.

All Awards Through SFY2009-10								
Retention Survey - 3 Years Post-obligation/6 years Post-award								
Discipline/ Specialty	Surveyed		Responded		Still in WY		Original Community	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
<i>Physician</i>	53	83%	37	70%	30	81%	26	87%
<i>Dentist</i>	13	87%	9	69%	9	100%	9	100%
<i>Allied</i>	122	83%	84	69%	78	93%	73	94%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>188</b>	<b>83%</b>	<b>130</b>	<b>69%</b>	<b>117</b>	<b>90%</b>	<b>108</b>	<b>92%</b>

In order to obtain more in-depth retention data on all 286 WHPLRP participants, the Office of Rural Health (ORH) conducted a study in Fall 2019 to determine the number of WHPLRP participants still licensed and practicing in Wyoming. All participants were checked against current licensure lists and the National Plan & Provider Enumeration System (NPPES) National Provider Identifier (NPI) Registry to determine license status and whether they were still likely practicing in Wyoming. To be considered as practicing or likely practicing in Wyoming, a provider had to have a Wyoming address on their active Wyoming license and in the NPI registry or only in the NPI registry when an address wasn't shown on their active Wyoming license. Providers without an active Wyoming license, with an out of state address on their active Wyoming license, or with an out of state NPI registry address more recent than their active Wyoming license renewal date were considered not practicing in Wyoming. In cases where a provider does not have an NPI number (most registered nurses), an active Wyoming license was considered as actively practicing in Wyoming. As of publication of this report, 77% (220 of 286) still maintain an active Wyoming license to practice their profession and 66% are likely practicing in Wyoming.

<b>WHPLRP Retention Study Fall 2019</b>					
<b>Discipline/Specialty</b>	<b># Awards</b>	<b>Licensed in WY</b>		<b>Practicing in WY</b>	
		<b>#</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>#</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Physician</b>	<b>87</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>78%</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>60%</b>
<i>Primary Care</i>	62	46	74%	34	55%
<i>Psychiatry</i>	8	7	88%	6	75%
<i>Other</i>	17	15	88%	12	71%
<b>Dentist</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>90%</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>85%</b>
<b>Allied</b>	<b>179</b>	<b>134</b>	<b>75%</b>	<b>121</b>	<b>68%</b>
<i>Nurse Practitioner</i>	26	23	88%	22	85%
<i>Physician Assistant</i>	27	18	67%	16	59%
<i>Mental Health</i>	46	33	72%	32	70%
<i>Other</i>	80	60	75%	51	64%
<b>Total</b>	<b>286</b>	<b>220</b>	<b>77%</b>	<b>190</b>	<b>66%</b>

### **Wyoming State Loan Repayment Program**

In 2014, Wyoming applied to the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) to receive funding under the State Loan Repayment Program. The State Loan Repayment Program grant requires a 1:1 match. Wyoming received \$80,000 in federal funds per year between 2014 and 2018 and matched it with \$80,000 per year in state general funds assigned to the Office of Rural Health. During the first four-year project period, WY-SLRP was open to primary care physicians, primary care physician assistants and nurse practitioners, and certified nurse midwives practicing full-time at an approved National Health Service Corps (NHSC) site. Physicians could receive up to \$60,000 in loan repayment and physician assistants, nurse practitioners, and certified nurse midwives could receive up to \$20,000 in loan repayment in exchange for two years of full-time practice at an approved site. From 2014 – 2018, WY-SLRP made 17 awards to 6 primary care physicians, 7 primary care physician assistants, and 4 primary care nurse practitioners.

Federal funding was reduced to \$68,000 per year for the 2019-2023 project period and is matched by \$68,000 in state general funds assigned to the Office of Rural Health. Federal funding was reduced by HRSA to accommodate additional state participation. WY-SLRP eligibility has also been expanded to include psychiatrists, behavioral health physician assistants

and nurse practitioners, and mental health clinicians including psychologists, licensed clinical social workers, psychiatric nurse specialists, licensed professional counselors, marriage and family therapists, and alcohol and substance abuse counselors. As a result in the reduction in funding, the maximum loan repayment amount was reduced from \$60,000 for physicians and psychiatrists, and all other disciplines can receive up to \$20,000 in loan repayment in exchange for two years of full-time practice at an approved site. An additional five awards were issued in 2018: two primary care physicians, one primary care physician assistant, and two primary care nurse practitioners.

Wyoming State Loan Repayment Program									
Year (SFY)	Discipline	# Awards	Total of Awards Issued (\$)	Total State Funds Paid	Total Federal Funds Paid	Funds Returned	# Default, Termination, Withdraw	Still Licensed in WY	
2015	Physician	2	\$ 120,000.00	\$ 60,000.00	\$ 60,000.00			2	100%
	NP/CNM	0	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -				
	PA	2	\$ 40,000.00	\$ 20,000.00	\$ 20,000.00			2	100%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>\$ 160,000.00</b>	<b>\$ 80,000.00</b>	<b>\$ 80,000.00</b>			<b>4</b>	<b>100%</b>
2016	Physician	1	\$ 60,000.00	\$ 30,000.00	\$ 30,000.00			1	100%
	NP/CNM	1	\$ 20,000.00	\$ 10,000.00	\$ 10,000.00			1	100%
	PA	2	\$ 40,000.00	\$ 20,000.00	\$ 20,000.00			2	100%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>\$ 120,000.00</b>	<b>\$ 60,000.00</b>	<b>\$ 60,000.00</b>			<b>4</b>	<b>100%</b>
2017	Physician	1	\$ 60,000.00	\$ 30,000.00	\$ 30,000.00			1	100%
	NP/CNM	2	\$ 40,000.00	\$ 20,000.00	\$ 20,000.00			2	100%
	PA	2	\$ 40,000.00	\$ 20,000.00	\$ 20,000.00			2	100%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>\$ 140,000.00</b>	<b>\$ 70,000.00</b>	<b>\$ 70,000.00</b>			<b>5</b>	<b>100%</b>
2018	Physician	2	\$ 120,000.00	\$ 60,000.00	\$ 60,000.00	\$ 60,000.00	1	2	100%
	NP/CNM	1	\$ 20,000.00	\$ 10,000.00	\$ 10,000.00			1	100%
	PA	1	\$ 20,000.00	\$ 10,000.00	\$ 10,000.00			1	100%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>\$ 160,000.00</b>	<b>\$ 80,000.00</b>	<b>\$ 80,000.00</b>	<b>\$ 60,000.00</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>100%</b>
2019	Physician	2	\$ 80,000.00	\$ 40,000.00	\$ 40,000.00			2	100%
	NP/CNM	2	\$ 36,000.00	\$ 18,000.00	\$ 18,000.00	\$ 16,000.00	1	2	100%
	PA	1	\$ 20,000.00	\$ 10,000.00	\$ 10,000.00			1	100%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>\$ 136,000.00</b>	<b>\$ 68,000.00</b>	<b>\$ 68,000.00</b>	<b>\$ 16,000.00</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Life of Program Total</b>		<b>22</b>	<b>\$ 716,000.00</b>	<b>\$ 358,000.00</b>	<b>\$ 358,000.00</b>	<b>\$ 76,000.00</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>100%</b>

\*NP=Nurse Practitioner CNM=Certified Nurse Midwife PA=Physician Assistant

### Adjacent State Study

All adjacent states - Colorado, Idaho, Montana, Nebraska, South Dakota, and Utah - have loan repayment or similar incentive programs to assist in the recruitment and retention of healthcare professionals to underserved areas. Colorado has multiple programs with the largest amount of annual funding (over \$8,000,000) and South Dakota has incentive programs that function much the same as traditional loan repayment without a tie to educational loans.

Colorado					
<b>Number of Programs</b>	4	<b>Total Annual Funding</b>	\$8,550,000	<b>Funding Breakdown</b>	58% state general funds 12% federal state loan repayment grant 30% private sources
<b>Colorado Health Service Corps (CHSC)</b>					Length of Service Obligation: 3 years
<b>Discipline Eligibility</b>		<b>Funding Per Award</b>		<b>Practice Location Requirements</b>	
Physicians Dentists		\$90,000 (full-time) \$45,000 (part-time)		CHSC certified safety-net clinic: 1) Federally Qualified Health Centers and Look-alikes 2) Certified Rural Health Clinics 3) Community Mental Health Centers 4) State Prisons and Mental Health Institutes 5) Community Funded Safety-net Clinics 6) Indian Health Service 7) School-based Health Centers	
Certified Nurse Midwives Psychologists Licensed Clinical Social Workers Licensed Professional Counselors Marriage and Family Therapists Nurse Practitioners Physician Assistants Psychiatric Nurse Specialists Clinical Pharmacists		\$50,000 (full-time) \$25,000 (part-time)			
Registered Dental Hygienists		\$20,000 (full-time) \$10,000 (part-time)			
<b>Expanded Dental Loan Option – CHSC</b>					
<b>Discipline Eligibility</b>		<b>Funding Per Award</b>		<b>Practice Location Requirements</b>	
Dentists		\$25,000 - \$50,000 based on number of underserved patients per month		1) Public or non-profit clinics that do not qualify for CHSC 2) Private for-profit dental practices open to new Medicaid and uninsured patients	
Dental Hygienists		\$6,000 - \$12,000 based on number of underserved patients per month			
<b>CHSC Faculty Loan Repayment Program</b>					Length of Service Obligation: 2 years
<b>Discipline Eligibility</b>		<b>Funding Per Award</b>		<b>Practice Location Requirements</b>	
Physician Faculty		\$45,000		Colorado Family Medicine Residency Programs	
<b>CHSC Physician Resident Loan Repayment Program</b>					Length of Service Obligation: 3 years
<b>Discipline Eligibility</b>		<b>Funding Per Award</b>		<b>Practice Location Requirements</b>	
Physician Family Medicine Resident		\$90,000		Colorado Family Medicine Residency Programs	
Idaho					
<b>Number of Programs</b>	2	<b>Total Annual Funding</b>	\$640,000	<b>Funding Breakdown</b>	60% state general funds 20% federal state loan repayment grant 20% private sources
<b>Idaho State Loan Repayment Program</b>					Length of Service Obligation: 2 years
<b>Discipline Eligibility</b>		<b>Funding Per Award</b>		<b>Practice Location Requirements</b>	
Physicians Dentists Certified Nurse Midwives Psychologists Licensed Clinical Social Workers		\$20,000 - \$50,000 depending on total matching funds provided by practice site		CHSC certified safety-net clinic: 1) Public or non-profit community and migrant health centers 2) Federally Qualified Health Center Look-alikes	

Licensed Professional Counselors Marriage and Family Therapists Nurse Practitioners Physician Assistants Psychiatric Nurse Specialists Clinical Pharmacists Registered Nurses Registered Dental Hygienists					3) Certified Rural Health Clinics 4) Critical Access Hospital with affiliated outpatient clinic 5) State and federal prisons 6) Community outpatient clinics 7) Long-term care facilities 8) State or county health department clinics 9) State mental health facilities 10) Community mental health facilities 11) Indian Health Service 12) Tribal Section 638 clinics
<b>Rural Physician Incentive Program</b>					Length of Service Obligation: 4 years
<b>Discipline Eligibility</b>		<b>Funding Per Award</b>		<b>Practice Location Requirements</b>	
Physicians – Primary Care		\$100,000		Population or geographic Health Professional Shortage Area (HPSA) for primary care	
<b>Montana</b>					
<b>Number of Programs</b>	2	<b>Total Annual Funding</b>	Unknown	<b>Funding Breakdown</b>	Unknown
<b>Montana State Loan Repayment Program</b>					Length of Service Obligation: 2 years
<b>Total Annual Funding</b>		\$255,000	<b>Funding Breakdown</b>		29% state general funds 50% federal state loan repayment grant 21% private sources
<b>Discipline Eligibility</b>		<b>Funding Per Award</b>		<b>Practice Location Requirements</b>	
Physicians Dentists Certified Nurse Midwives Psychologists Licensed Clinical Social Workers Licensed Professional Counselors Marriage and Family Therapists Nurse Practitioners Physician Assistants Psychiatric Nurse Specialists Clinical Pharmacists Registered Nurses Licensed Professional Nurses Registered Dental Hygienists		\$50,000		Approved National Health Service Corps Sites: 1) Public or private non-profit facilities or rural practice sites in a Health Professional Shortage Area a. Must accept Medicaid, Medicare, and qualifying health insurance plans b. Must have a sliding fee scale	
<b>Montana Rural Physician Incentive Program</b>					Length of Service Obligation: 5 years
<b>Total Annual Funding</b>		Unknown	<b>Funding Breakdown</b>		100% state via fees assessed to Montana medical and osteopathic medical students in WICHE and WWAMI programs
<b>Discipline Eligibility</b>		<b>Funding Per Award</b>		<b>Practice Location Requirements</b>	
Physicians		\$150,000		Medically underserved populations and rural communities with documented	

					difficulty attracting and maintaining adequate numbers of physicians
<b>Nebraska</b>					
<b>Number of Programs</b>	2	<b>Total Annual Funding</b>	\$2,900,000	<b>Funding Breakdown</b>	34% state general funds 16% federal state loan repayment grant 50% private sources
<b>Nebraska Loan Repayment Program for Rural Health Professionals</b>					Length of Service Obligation: 3 years
<b>Total Annual Funding</b>		\$2,000,000	<b>Funding Breakdown</b>		50% state general funds 50% private sources
<b>Discipline Eligibility</b>		<b>Funding Per Award</b>		<b>Practice Location Requirements</b>	
Physicians Dentists		\$180,000-\$200,000		Federal and state designated shortage areas and facilities	
Nurse Practitioners Physician Assistants Licensed Mental Health Practitioners Pharmacists Occupational Therapists Physical Therapists		\$90,000-\$100,000			
<b>Nebraska State Loan Repayment Program</b>					Length of Service Obligation: 3 years
<b>Total Annual Funding</b>		\$900,000	<b>Funding Breakdown</b>		50% federal state loan repayment grant 50% private sources
<b>Discipline Eligibility</b>		<b>Funding Per Award</b>		<b>Practice Location Requirements</b>	
Physicians Dentists		\$180,000-\$200,000		Approved facilities in federally designated shortage areas	
Nurse Practitioners Physician Assistants Licensed Mental Health Practitioners Pharmacists		\$90,000-\$100,000			
<b>South Dakota</b>					
<b>Number of Programs</b>	2	<b>Total Annual Funding</b>	Unknown	<b>Funding Breakdown</b>	Unknown
<i>Note: These programs are incentive programs but function in a similar fashion to loan repayment programs the same goal of recruiting and retaining healthcare professionals in underserved areas.</i>					
<b>South Dakota Recruitment Assistance Program</b>					Length of Service Obligation: 3 years
<b>Total Annual Funding</b>		\$2,781,577	<b>Funding Breakdown</b>		State funds and private source funds; breakdown varies by award
<b>Discipline Eligibility</b>		<b>Funding Per Award</b>		<b>Practice Location Requirements</b>	

Physicians Dentists		\$231,834		1) Population of 10,000 or less 2) Cannot be located within a 20-mile radius extending from the city center of a city of 50,000 people or more 3) Have an unmet provider need greater than 0.25 full-time equivalent (FTE) 4) SD Department of Health has evaluated the community and determined a need for eligible providers and the ability to sustain and support additional providers
Nurse Practitioners Physician Assistants Nurse Midwife		\$66,819		
<b>South Dakota Rural Healthcare Facility Recruitment Assistance Program</b>				Length of Service Obligation: 3 years
<b>Total Annual Funding</b>		Unknown; up to 60 awards per year	<b>Funding Breakdown</b>	State funds and private source funds; breakdown varies by award
<b>Discipline Eligibility</b>		<b>Funding Per Award</b>		<b>Practice Location Requirements</b>
Dietitian or Nutritionist Licensed Practical Nurse Registered Nurse Occupational Therapist Respiratory Therapist Laboratory Technologist Pharmacist Physical Therapist Paramedic Medical Technologist Radiologic Technologist Speech Therapist Healthcare Social Worker		\$10,000		South Dakota licensed facilities in communities with a population under 10,000: 1) Hospitals 2) Nursing homes 3) Federally certified home health agencies 4) Chemical dependency treatment facilities 5) Intermediate care facilities for individuals with intellectual disabilities 6) Community support providers 7) Community mental health centers 8) ESRD facilities 9) Community health centers (FQHCs) 10) Ambulance services
<b>Utah</b>				
<b>Number of Programs</b>	2	<b>Total Annual Funding</b>	\$819,300	<b>Funding Breakdown</b>
				Mix of state general funds, federal state loan repayment grant, and private sources
<b>Rural Physician Loan Repayment Program</b>				Length of Service Obligation: 2 years
<b>Total Annual Funding</b>		\$300,000	<b>Funding Breakdown</b>	50% state general funds 50% private sources
<b>Discipline Eligibility</b>		<b>Funding Per Award</b>		<b>Practice Location Requirements</b>

Physicians		\$30,000		Rural hospitals	
<b>Health Care Workforce Financial Assistance Program</b>				Length of Service Obligation: 2 years	
<b>Total Annual Funding</b>		\$519,300	<b>Funding Breakdown</b>		50% state general funds 50% federal state loan repayment grant
<b>Discipline Eligibility</b>		<b>Funding Per Award</b>		<b>Practice Location Requirements</b>	
Physicians Dentists Physician Assistants Nurses Mental Health Therapists Other licensed health professions as established by rule		Unknown		Eligible facilities in a federally designed Health Professional Shortage Area (HPSA)	
<b>Wyoming</b>					
<b>Number of Programs</b>	1	<b>Total Annual Funding</b>	\$136,000	<b>Funding Breakdown</b>	50% state general funds 50% federal state loan repayment grant
<b>Wyoming State Loan Repayment Program</b>				Length of Service Obligation: 2 years	
<b>Total Annual Funding</b>		\$136,000	<b>Funding Breakdown</b>		50% state general funds 50% federal state loan repayment grant
<b>Discipline Eligibility</b>		<b>Funding Per Award</b>		<b>Practice Location Requirements</b>	
Physicians		\$40,000		Approved National Health Service Corps (NHSC) sites	
Physician Assistants Nurse Practitioners Certified Nurse Midwives Mental Health Clinicians		\$20,000			
<b>INACTIVE</b> <b>Wyoming Healthcare Professional Loan Repayment Program</b>				Length of Service Obligation: 3 years	
<b>Total Annual Funding</b>		Not funded	<b>Funding Breakdown</b>		Not funded
<b>Discipline Eligibility</b>		<b>Funding Per Award</b>		<b>Practice Location Requirements</b>	
Physicians Dentists		\$90,000		Hospitals, clinics, private practices in areas determined by the Office of Rural Health to be underserved	
Nurse Practitioners Physician Assistants Mental Health Clinicians All other licensed health professions		\$60,000			

## **Federal Loan Repayment Programs**

### *National Health Service Corps*

The National Health Service Corps (NHSC) has several loan repayment and scholarships programs. All NHSC programs require a clinician to practice full or part-time at a site approved by the NHSC. NHSC approved sites must be located in a Health Professional Shortage Area (HPSA) and utilize a sliding fee scale for low-income patients. NHSC programs have limited discipline eligibility and prioritize to HPSAs with higher need scores. In addition, NHSC participants are required to spend most of their time providing outpatient care and most clinicians working in hospital settings are not eligible. Currently, there are 29 NHSC participants in Wyoming practicing at 22 NHSC approved sites. Of the 29 NHSC participants, 17 are mental health clinicians, 11 are primary care physicians, physician assistants, or nurse practitioners, and one is a dentist. Between 2014 and 2019, NHSC received 220 total applications from eligible providers and was only able to provide awards to 52 (23.6%).

<b>NHSC LRP WY Applications &amp; Awards by Discipline 2014-2019</b>		
<b>Discipline</b>	<b>Total</b>	
	<b>Apps</b>	<b>Awards</b>
Allopathic Physician	9	2
Certified Nurse Midwife	2	0
Dentist	2	1
Health Service Psychologist	14	2
Licensed Clinical Social Worker	63	11
Licensed Professional Counselor	70	14
Marriage and Family Therapist	5	1
Nurse Practitioner	34	7
Osteopathic Physician	5	5
Physician Assistant	12	5
Registered Dental Hygienist	2	2
Substance Use Disorder Professional	2	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>220</b>	<b>52</b>

### *NURSE Corps*

NURSE Corps loan repayment is available to licensed registered nurses, advanced practice registered nurses (including nurse practitioners), and nurse faculty members with qualifying nursing debt. Nurses must practice at a critical shortage facility (CSF) in a high need area and

nurse faculty must practice at an accredited school of nursing. CSFs are public or private non-profit healthcare facilities located in a designated HPSA for primary care or mental health. A school of nursing is eligible if accredited by a national nursing accrediting agency or a state agency recognized by the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Education. Per the Health Resources and Services Administration’s (HRSA) Data Warehouse, there are currently 3 NURSE Corps loan repayment participants in the state: 1 in Sundance, 1 in Sheridan, and 1 in Pinedale.

*State Loan Repayment Program*

State Loan Repayment Programs are funded by a grant from HRSA to participating states. Participating states must match the federal funds \$1 for \$1 with state general funds, private donation funds, or matching funds from participating practice sites. State Loan Repayment Programs mirror the federal NHSC program requirements with expanded discipline eligibility and state level administration of the program. Wyoming’s State Loan Repayment Program is open only to primary care physicians and psychiatrists, primary care and behavioral health physician assistants and nurse practitioners, certified nurse midwives, and non-psychiatrist mental health clinicians practicing at NHSC approved sites in federally designated HPSAs. Currently, 41 states (including Colorado, Idaho, Montana, Nebraska, and Utah), the District of Columbia, and 1 U.S. Territory (Mariana Islands) receive State Loan Repayment Program funding from HRSA, and Wyoming receives the least amount of funding of all grantees at \$68,000 per year.

State Loan Repayment Program Federal Grants Wyoming and Adjacent States	
Colorado	\$1,000,000
Nebraska	\$450,000
Idaho	\$225,000
Utah	\$202,500
Montana	\$127,500
Wyoming	\$68,000

## **Wyoming's Provider Capacity and Shortages**

### *Health Professional Shortage Areas*

The State of Wyoming suffers shortages of primary care medical, dental, and mental health providers. The Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) has designated 19 geographic areas, 5 population groups and 25 facilities (federally qualified health centers, Indian Health Services, Rural Health Clinics) as health professional shortage areas (HPSAs) for primary care; 4 geographic areas, 4 population groups, and 25 facilities as HPSAs for dental health; and 5 multi-county regional geographic areas covering the entire state and 25 facilities as HPSAs for mental health. HRSA estimates a total of 24 full-time primary care physicians, 5 dentists and 25 psychiatrists are needed to eliminate all HPSA designations statewide.

HPSA designations have a minimum population to provider ratio required for designation, and with Wyoming's low population numbers, areas suffering from shortages may not meet the minimum ratio to obtain a HPSA designation. While some areas may meet the requirements for designation as a HPSA, they may not always meet the need thresholds established for awards under federal loan repayment programs such as the National Health Service Corps or the federally funded State Loan Repayment Programs. Quite often only a portion of a county qualifies for designation; however, the clinicians that serve those patients are located in the nearest community large enough to support providers. For example, Sheridan County's primary care HPSA designation covers the eastern portion of the county but does not include the City of Sheridan preventing those clinicians from participating in both the federal NHSC loan repayment programs and the federally funded State Loan Repayment Programs. The Wyoming Healthcare Professional Loan Repayment Program provides a means to assist those non-designated underserved areas in the recruitment and retention of high need healthcare professionals.

The maps in Appendix I show primary care HPSAs (shaded green), dental HPSAs (shaded purple), and mental health HPSAs (shaded blue). Areas shaded in yellow are not designated.

### *Rural Health Works Analysis*

In response to the limitation of HPSAs in determining shortage areas within the state, the Office of Rural Health utilizes the Rural Health Works (RHW) model, developed by the National Center for Rural Health Works, to determine state-level shortage areas for primary care. These state-level shortage areas are used to prioritize awards under state-funded recruitment, retention, and access to care programs such as the Wyoming Healthcare Professional Loan Repayment Program. RHW uses a formula that determines the number of full-time physicians needed to meet the demand generated by the population. The 2017 Primary Care Physician Survey and RHW Analysis below shows that 20 of Wyoming's counties do not have enough full-time

equivalent (FTE) physicians to meet the demands of the population. Conversely, Teton County has adequate supply of primary care physicians, and Natrona and Fremont Counties have more primary care physicians than are needed to meet demand.

<b>2017 Primary Care Physician Survey and Rural Health Works Analysis</b>				
<b>County Need Rankings</b>				
County	Total Survey Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) Physicians	RHW Model Physician FTE Needed	Additional FTE Needed	Supply vs. Demand (Shortage/Overage)
Albany	7.43	15.73	8.3	Shortage
Laramie	40.3	45.71	5.41	Shortage
Sweetwater	14.35	19.18	4.83	Shortage
Carbon	3.58	7.14	3.56	Shortage
Campbell	16.5	19.9	3.4	Shortage
Sheridan	11.75	14.98	3.23	Shortage
Uinta	6.20	9.28	3.08	Shortage
Lincoln	6.43	9.16	2.73	Shortage
Platte	1.8	4.51	2.71	Shortage
Big Horn	3.23	5.89	2.66	Shortage
Crook	1.65	3.69	2.04	Shortage
Goshen	5.4	6.66	1.26	Shortage
Niobrara	0	1.25	1.25	Shortage
Johnson	3.15	4.39	1.24	Shortage
Washakie	2.83	4.03	1.2	Shortage
Weston	2.35	3.41	1.06	Shortage
Sublette	3.7	4.75	1.05	Shortage
Converse	5.6	6.53	0.93	Shortage
Park	14.6	15.03	0.43	Shortage
Hot Springs	2.25	2.49	0.24	Shortage
Teton	11.43	10.75	-0.68	Overage
Natrona	38.55	36.75	-1.8	Overage
Fremont	21.4	19.09	-2.31	Overage

*The Primary Care Physician Survey counts only outpatient family medicine, internal medicine, pediatric, obstetrics and gynecology, and geriatric medicine physicians*

In addition, the Center produces reports on the supply and demand of twelve physician specialties: family medicine, internal medicine, obstetrics and gynecology, pediatrics, psychiatry, cardiology, dermatology, neurology, ophthalmology, orthopedics, otolaryngology, and urology. Per the below table, the Center reports a shortage of over 100 primary care physicians (family medicine, internal medicine, obstetrics and gynecology and pediatrics) based

on demand versus the 24 HRSA estimates are needed to eliminate primary care HPSAs statewide.

<b>National Center for Rural Health Works - Specialty Physician Shortages by County</b>												
<b>County</b> PC=Primary Care HPSA D=Dental HPSA MH=Mental Health HPSA	<i>Family Medicine</i>	<i>Internal Medicine</i>	<i>Obstetrics/ Gynecology</i>	<i>Pediatrics</i>	<i>Psychiatry</i>	<i>Cardiology</i>	<i>Dermatology</i>	<i>Neurology</i>	<i>Ophthalmology</i>	<i>Orthopedics</i>	<i>Otolaryngology</i>	<i>Urology</i>
Albany <sup>D,MH</sup>	2.3		0.1	2.2	0.3	0.6	0.6		0.1			
Big Horn <sup>PC, MH</sup>		3.5	1.6	1.7	1.3	0.6	0.6	0.4	0.8	0.8	0.4	0.3
Campbell <sup>PC, MH</sup>		3.4		4.1	3.1		2	0.2	2.7			
Carbon <sup>PC, D, MH</sup>		3.5	0.8	2.3	1.6	0.8	0.8	0.5	1	1	0.5	0.4
Converse <sup>PC, MH</sup>			0.7	2.1	1.4		0.7		0.9		0.5	0.3
Crook <sup>PC, MH</sup>	0.9	2.1	1	1	0.8	0.4	0.4	0.2	0.5	0.5	0.2	0.2
Fremont <sup>PC, D, MH</sup>					1.2	2.1						1
Goshen <sup>PC, D, MH</sup>		4	0.8	1.8	0.5	0.7	0.7	0.4	0.9		0.5	0.4
Hot Springs <sup>PC, MH</sup>		1.6	0.7	0.6	0.6	0.3	0.3	0.2	0.4	0.4	0.2	0.1
Johnson <sup>PC, MH</sup>		2.6	1.2	1.1	1	0.5	0.5	0.3	0.6	0.6	0.3	0.2
Laramie <sup>PC, MH</sup>							1.5		2.9			
Lincoln <sup>PC, MH</sup>		5	2.2	2.9	1.8		0.9	0.5	1.2			0.4
Natrona <sup>PC, D, MH</sup>				3.5					1.9			
Niobrara <sup>PC, D, MH</sup>		0.8	0.4	0.3	0.3	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.2	0.1	0.1
Park <sup>PC, MH</sup>				1.8	1.2		0.5		1			
Platte <sup>PC, D, MH</sup>	1.8	2.7		1	1	0.5	0.5	0.3	0.6	0.7	0.3	0.3
Sheridan <sup>PC, D, MH</sup>	3.8			1	1.2				2			
Sublette <sup>PC, MH</sup>		2.8	1.1	1.5	1	0.5	0.5	0.3	0.6	0.6	0.3	0.2
Sweetwater <sup>PC, MH</sup>	3.6	7.3		2.4	3	2	1	0.2	1.6			
Teton <sup>MH</sup>												
Uinta <sup>PC, MH</sup>		2.5		2.6		1	1					
Washakie <sup>MH</sup>		1.5	1.1	1.2	0.9	0.5	0.5	0.3	0.6	0.6	0.3	0.2
Weston <sup>PC, MH</sup>		2.1	0.9	0.9	0.8	0.4	0.4	0.2	0.5	0.5	0.3	0.2
<b>Total Shortage</b>	<b>12.4</b>	<b>45.4</b>	<b>12.6</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>13.5</b>	<b>4.1</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>5.9</b>	<b>3.9</b>	<b>4.3</b>
<b>Primary Care Shortage</b>	<b>106.4</b>			<b>Psychiatry Shortage</b>			<b>23</b>	<b>Specialist Shortage</b>			<b>63.7</b>	

## National Workforce Projections

The Robert Graham Center for Policy Studies in Family Medicine and Primary Care publishes primary care workforce projections for each state. The below table shows the current projections for Wyoming and its adjacent states including current and needed primary care physicians (PCPs), and state and national average population to provider (P:P) ratios. Wyoming and Idaho have a population to provider ratio that is currently significantly higher (worse) than the national average, and all states will need additional primary care physicians by 2030. Wyoming, with its low population, will still need 104 additional providers to address demand created by population growth, an aging population and an increasingly insured population, and will have to compete with adjacent states – all of which need additional PCPs and have larger and more extensive loan repayment or incentive programs.

<b>Robert Graham Center Primary Care Workforce Projections - Wyoming and Adjacent States</b>					
State	Current PCPs	Additional PCPs needed by 2030	P:P Ratio	National Average	Status versus National Average P:P Ratio
CO	3,604	1,773	1,404:1	1,463:1	Lower (Better)
ID	864	382	1,754:1	1,463:1	Higher (Worse)
MT	686	197	1,443:1	1,463:1	Lower (Better)
NE	1,187	133	1,489:1	1,463:1	Higher (Worse)
SD	580	162	1,402:1	1,463:1	Lower (Better)
UT	2,375	1,095	1,092:1	1,463:1	Lower (Better)
WY	340	104	1,654:1	1,463:1	Higher (Worse)

## **Discussion**

Wyoming suffers from significant shortages of primary care, psychiatry, and specialist providers statewide and the Robert Graham Center estimates Wyoming will need an additional 104 primary care physicians by 2030. Further, the Association of American Medical Colleges, 2019 Wyoming Physician Workforce Profile, shows 33.6% of Wyoming's physicians are aged 60 or older and nearing retirement, which will exacerbate these shortages.

Surrounding states invest heavily in loan repayment and provider incentive programs. Wyoming, as the lowest-funded state (both by state and federal programs), must adopt a more robust approach to statewide recruitment and retention of healthcare professionals in order to compete for providers. Without increased state support for healthcare professional recruitment and retention strategies, including loan repayment, Wyoming will have difficulty moving the needle in a positive direction, and Wyoming's current demographic trends will only continue to worsen the shortage of healthcare professionals statewide. While the Wyoming State Loan Repayment Program, federal National Health Service Corps, and NURSE Corps loan repayment programs are helpful to qualifying areas and sites, provider and site eligibility is extremely

limited. Additionally, these programs are already fully-utilized and an increase in federal support is not likely in the absence of increased state support.

The Wyoming Healthcare Professional Loan Repayment Program (WHPLRP), with its extensive provider and site eligibility and proven track record, is uniquely positioned to fill gaps left by federal programs when it is funded and supported by state policy-makers. WHPLRP, when funded, was in high demand and extremely successful in assisting underserved communities in recruiting and retaining healthcare professionals. The demand for WHPLRP is evidenced by 1,715 total applications with 286 awards to healthcare professionals practicing in 22 of Wyoming's 23 counties. As 77% of WHPLRP recipients are still actively licensed in their profession in Wyoming and 66% are still likely practicing in the state, WHPLRP's success as a recruitment and retention tool for Wyoming's underserved communities is apparent.

### **Next Steps/Recommendations**

The Office of Rural Health recommends the following next steps:

- A.** Assess the impact of continued non-funding of WHPLRP and minimal availability of federal loan repayment programs on the ability of safety-net facilities to recruit and retain healthcare professionals. The assessment will aim to determine:
  - i.** Importance of loan repayment to overall recruitment strategy
  - ii.** Level of impact inadequate loan repayment options have on the ability to recruit
  - iii.** Whether Wyoming is losing potential recruits to other states with more loan repayment options
- B.** Explore different policies used by other states to enhance healthcare professional recruitment and retention to alleviate shortages and increase access to care
- C.** Explore additional funding streams including but not limited to:
  - i.** Matching funds from practice locations and/or communities
  - ii.** Fee assessment on healthcare professional education training program tuition (see Montana Rural Physician Incentive Program)
- D.** Explore ways to enhance non-loan repayment recruitment programs and strategies including but not limited to:
  - i.** Conrad 30 J-1 Visa Waiver Program for international medical graduates
  - ii.** Healthcare career pipeline programs for middle school, junior high, and high school students
  - iii.** Improvement and expansion of healthcare careers education and training programs

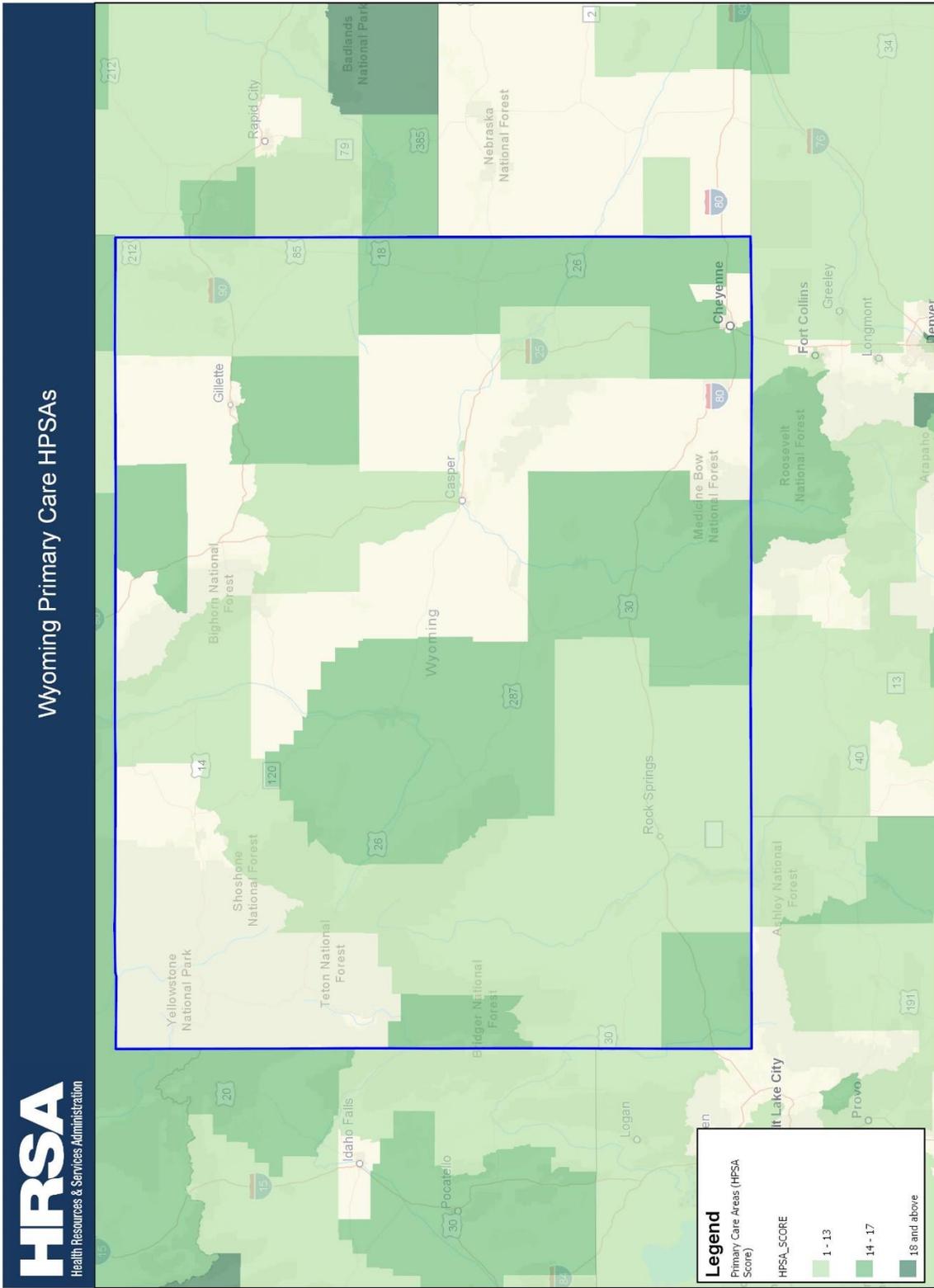
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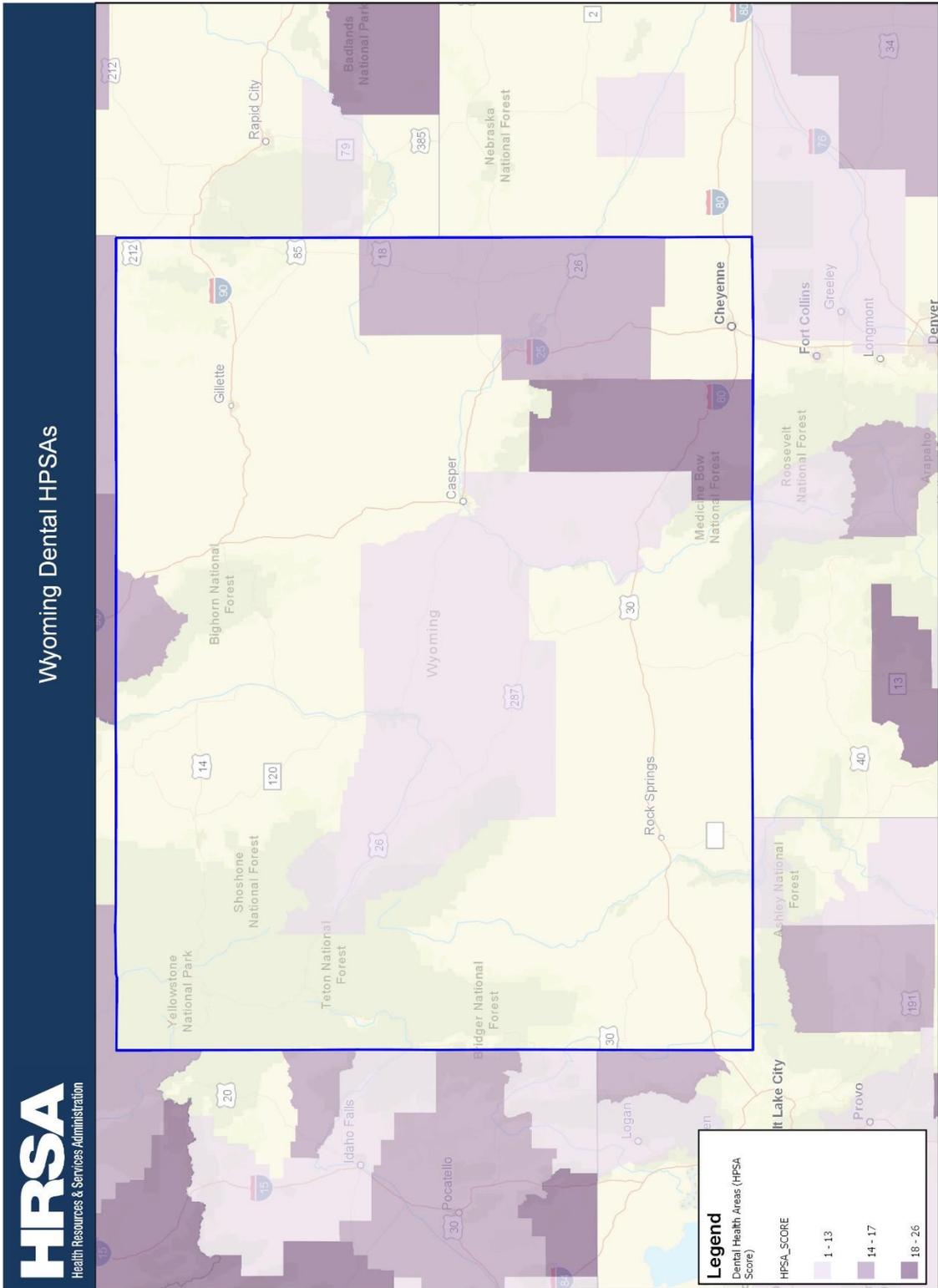
Appendix I  
 Healthcare Professional Shortage Area (HPSA) Designation Maps



Prepared by:  
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[data.HRSA.gov](http://data.HRSA.gov)

Appendix I  
 Healthcare Professional Shortage Area (HPSA) Designation Maps



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Healthcare Professional Shortage Area (HPSA) Designation Maps

