

Policy Statement on NC Dental Professional Shortage Areas

The NC Office of Rural Health is charged to identify Dental Health Professional Shortage Areas for the state. OHR regularly assesses dental provider availability and community needs to better align capacity with demand.

DHPSA policy is intended to:

- Encourage greater collaboration among community dental providers to address access to care;
- Increase entry points into the oral health delivery system by supporting provision of preventive services in non-traditional sites, satellite offices or mobile dental clinics; and
- Increase efficiency and effectiveness of dental public health services by identifying priority dental HPSAs.

The Dental Rule connected to this policy is:

- **21 NCAC 16W .0104 DENTAL ACCESS SHORTAGE AREAS**
Public health hygienists who are practicing in public schools, nursing homes, rest homes, long-term care facilities, and rural and community clinics provided through federal, State, county, or local governments in areas identified by the Office of Rural Health in the Department of Health and Human Services as dental access shortage areas may perform clinical hygiene, supervise a Dental Assistant, and practice other dental procedures pursuant to 21 NCAC 16W .0104 DENTAL ACCESS SHORTAGE AREAS ([here](#)).

Determine the Dental HPSA of any service site by using the following website tool:

<https://data.hrsa.gov/tools/shortage-area/hpsa-find>

Complete the following 4 data fields on the left.

1. Select State
2. Select County
3. Select Discipline (Dental)
4. Select Status (Designated)

Click the SUBMIT button.

In some cases, the entire county may not be designated. These are referred to as sub-county or partial county designations. They are made up of a group of census tracts (C.T.s) or minor civil divisions (MCDs, townships in NC) that are usually grouped because they share similar demographics, but sometimes it is due to geographic barriers within the county. When you select a county and HPSAfind returns a report there will be a plus sign (+) on the far left of the row. If it is just a county level report the name of the designated county will be shown and if it is a sub-county designation clicking on the plus sign will display a list of the components (C.T.s or MCDs) of that designation.

If you are looking for the HPSA status of a specific address you can also use the following tool to check the HPSA status, <https://data.hrsa.gov/tools/shortage-area/by-address>. This tool will return the HPSA status for primary care HPSAs, mental health HPSAs, and dental HPSAs for that address.

