Overview
Application for a Medically Underserved Population Designation for Fairfax County

Definitions/General Information

- Medically Underserved Areas (MUAs)/Medically Underserved Populations (MUPs) are defined by the federal government to include areas or population groups with a demonstrated shortage of personal health care services.

- The MUA/MUP designation process was established to assist the federal government in allocating community health center grant funds to areas of greatest need.

- The MUP designation documents the unmet health care needs of a subset of the population within a defined geographic area, called a Rational Service Area (RSA).

- For a designation, a composite index, Index of Medical Underservice (IMU), of four need indicators is compiled for a service area to obtain a score for the area. The IMU score considers: individual area’s poverty rate, infant mortality rate, percentage of aged population, and primary care physicians per 1,000 population.

- The IMU scale is from 0 to 100, where 0 represents completely underserved and 100 represents best served or least underserved. Under the established criteria, each service area found to have an IMU of 62.0 or less qualifies for designation as an MUA. MUPs are identified based on documentation of unusual local conditions that result in access barriers to medical services.

- Individual population groups in areas not qualifying as MUAs can qualify as MUPs using the IMU method or a process whereby the population group’s unusual local conditions are documented to result in a barrier to access to health care. In some cases, this designation must be done through the governor's office when the underserved area or population does not meet the criteria for a federal designation but the unmet need is still significant.

Benefits

- A MUA or MUP is required for a Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC) Grant. A FQHC is a type of provider defined by the Medicare and Medicaid statutes.

- For FQHCs (that are PHS 330 grant recipients), the biggest benefit is the grant funding. For new starts, funding up to $650,000 can be requested.

Other benefits include:
- Enhanced Medicare and Medicaid reimbursement.
- Medical malpractice coverage through the Federal Tort Claims Act.
- Eligibility to purchase prescription and non-prescription medications for outpatients at reduced cost through the 340B Drug Pricing.
- Access to National Health Service Corps (NHSC): Primary care providers can pay off student loans; students pursuing careers in primary care can receive scholarships.
- Access to the Vaccines for Children (VFC).
- Eligibility for various other federal grants and programs, e.g., New Access Point grants for satellite facilities.

History

An initial “Application for Exceptional Medically Underserved Population Designation” for portions of Fairfax and Arlington Counties, Virginia, was completed May 22, 2002. This was an initial effort that was not submitted to HRSA. It appeared that the chances of approval were greater with an “Application for Exceptional Medically Underserved Population Designation” that included census tracts in Arlington County and Alexandria only; this application was submitted to HRSA September 16, 2002.

Upon completing a Primary Care Physician Survey Report, the Fairfax County Health Department submitted an “Application for Medically Underserved Population Designation” to the Virginia Department of Health on October 31, 2005. This Application sought to have designated the Spanish-speaking residents in select, contiguous census tracts of the Bailey’s Crossroads region in Fairfax and Arlington Counties. The request was for a “Medically Underserved Population” or an “Exceptional Medically Underserved population.” This application was not forwarded to HRSA as the likelihood of approval was not considered great.

Current Application

- The latest application was forwarded to the Virginia Department of Health on February 29, 2012, for review. The formal submission was an “Application for Exceptional Medically Underserved Population Designation,” for contiguous census tracts in the Lee/Mt. Vernon (Richmond Highway) area of Fairfax County.
- The “best” IMU Score (66.1) for contiguous census tracts within Fairfax County represents the proposed Rational Service Area (RSA) is comprised of the following contiguous census: 415400, 421400, 421500, 421600, 421700, 421800, and 421900. The following zip codes correspond to the RSA census tracts: 22060, 22306, 22307, and 22309. Map 1 (attached) shows the location of the proposed RSA.
The traditional method yielded an IMU score of 66.1, a score that is higher than that necessary for an MUP/MUA designation. The RSA has greater than 40% Black and Hispanic, and the total minority (non-White) population ranges from 47.72% to 76.96%.

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<td>% Population at or below 100% Poverty</td>
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**Index of Medical Underservice (IMU) Score** 66.1

To validate the disproportionate health outcomes in the proposed RSA, a comprehensive geographic analysis was conducted. These measures include access to primary care, maternal and child health outcomes (e.g., low weight and premature births, infant death, and teen pregnancy), as well as socioeconomic characteristics. The geo-coded data used to support this application for an Exceptional MUP Designation is derived from the following sources:

- [Map 2] Community Health Care Network (CHCN) clients (FY 2011),
- [Map 3] Low-income, uninsured CHCN applicants, screened and on the waiting list, for primary health care services (point in time 12/27/11),
- [Map 4] Maternity clients served by the Fairfax County Health Department (FY 2011),
- [Map 5] Fairfax County Teen Birth Data (CY 2007), and

**Steps in the Approval Process**

- Health Department staff sought final input from and review by the Virginia Department of Health (VDH).
- Letters of support from key safety net providers were included with the application: Loudoun Community Health Center; Alexandria Neighborhood Health Services, Inc.; Inova Health System; Robert Graham Center, Policy Studies in Family Medicine and Primary Care; Virginia Community Healthcare Association; Northern Virginia Health Foundation; Fairfax-Falls Church Community Services Board; Molina Healthcare, Inc.
- The Health Department and VDH responded to questions from the Governor’s office to secure endorsement.
- The Health Department staff briefed the Health Care Advisory Board and other appropriate BAC’s.
- The Governor has signed the Application and forwarded it to HRSA's Bureau of Health Professions’ Division of Shortage Designation.

- HRSA will make the final determination.

**MAP 1: Lee/Mt. Vernon Rational Service Area (RSA)**

**Proposed Lee/Mt. Vernon RSA Census Tracts:** 415400, 421400, 421500, 421600, 421700, 421800, and 421900

**Contiguous Census Tracts to the Proposed Lee/Mt. Vernon RSA:** 415100, 415300, 415500, 415600, 415900, 416000, 416100, 416200, 420500, 420600, 420800, 421100, 421200, 421300, and 422000
MAP 2: CHCN Clients by Census Tract (RSA, Contiguous, and County wide)

All CHCN Clients (FY 2011)
Mean - All CHCN clients inside RSA: 536
Mean - All CHCN clients outside RSA for Contiguous Area: 114.7
Mean - All CHCN clients outside RSA County wide: 160.6
MAP 3: Persons on the CHCN Waiting List by Census Tract (RSA, Contiguous, and County wide)

CHCN Waiting List Clients (point in time 12/27/2011)
Mean - Waitlist Clients inside RSA: 72.6
Mean - Waitlist Clients for contiguous area: 14.0
Mean - Waitlist Clients outside RSA County wide: 21.3
**MAP 4:** Fairfax County Health Department Maternity Patients by Census Tract (RSA, Contiguous, and County wide)

Maternity Data (FY 2011)
Mean - Clients inside RSA: 91.14
Mean - Clients for contiguous area: 20.4
Mean - Clients outside RSA County wide: 26.82
MAP 5: Teen Birth Data by Census Tract (RSA, Contiguous, and County wide)

Teen Birth Data (CY 2007)
Mean - Clients inside RSA: 2.85
Mean - Clients for contiguous area: 0.87
Mean - Clients outside RSA County wide: 0.58
**MAP 6:** Poverty Data by Census Tract (RSA, Contiguous, and County wide)

**Poverty Data (2005-2009)**
- Mean - Poverty Rate inside RSA: 11.62
- Mean - Poverty Rate for contiguous area: 3.72
- Mean - Poverty Rate outside RSA County wide: 4.65