



Primary Care Resource Initiative for Missouri

Annual Report 2021



About This Report

The Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services (DHSS) established the Primary Care Resource Initiative for Missouri (PRIMO) Program, as a result of the Missouri Revised Statutes Section 191.411. This legislation authorizes DHSS to develop and implement a plan to make health care services more accessible to all Missouri residents. The PRIMO Program focuses on improving health care delivery systems and increasing the number of primary care, dental health, and mental health professionals practicing in Missouri Health Professional Shortage Areas (HPSAs). The DHSS Office of Rural Health and Primary Care (ORHPC) administers the PRIMO Program. This report demonstrates the PRIMO budget and activities for State Fiscal Year 2021 (SFY21).

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PRIMO STUDENT LOANS

The Primary Care Resource Initiative for Missouri (PRIMO) is a comprehensive program designed to improve health care delivery in the State of Missouri. There are four components to PRIMO:

- Student Loans
- Student Loan Repayment Program (SLRP)
- Health Care Delivery System Development
- Recruitment/Placement of Health Professionals

The PRIMO student loan program is a competitive state program that awards forgivable loans to students pursuing training leading to Missouri licensure in specific health care professions as a primary care physician, dentist, or dental hygienist and whom intend to practice in a Missouri designated medical or dental Health Professional Shortage Area (HPSA) following licensure.

Funding Sources

- **PRIMO Student Loans:** The Missouri Hospital Association (MHA) provides a generous donation to assist in funding student loans, in addition to payments from loan recipients who have defaulted on their contracts, default payments, tax intercepts and wage garnishments.
- **Student Loan Repayment Program (SLRP):** The Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) issues states funding through a Federal SLRP Grant requiring a dollar-to-dollar (1:1) state funds match. The match is acquired from the MHA providing a generous donation, in addition to payments from loan recipients who defaulted on their contracts, default payments, tax intercepts and wage garnishments.
- **Recruitment/Placement of Health Professionals:** The HRSA issues states with funding through a Federal Primary Care Office (PCO) Grant, in addition to the state Health Access Incentive Fund (HAIF).
- **Health Care Delivery System Development:** Provided by the HAIF.
- **Rural Residency:** Provided by the HAIF.
- **Area Health Education Centers (AHECs):** Appropriated by the General Assembly.



PRIMO awards funding for eligible educational expenses to qualified students pursuing careers as licensed physicians specializing in family practice, general practice, general internal medicine, general pediatrics, obstetric and gynecological care, general dentist or dental hygienist.

Learn more:
Health.Mo.Gov/PRIMO

PRIMO STUDENT LOANS

The PRIMO Student Loan program is a competitive state program that awards funding to Missouri residents attending a Missouri institution pursuing training leading to Missouri licensure as primary care physicians, dentists, and dental hygienists. Upon completion of training, the PRIMO student loan recipients practice in a designated primary care or dental health HPSA in Missouri.

PRIMO Loan Applicant Qualifications

- Full-time enrollment at a Missouri educational institution in a course of study leading to licensure in one of the qualifying health care professions.
- Resident of Missouri for at least one year, prior to applying.
- Express a desire to work in a medical, dental or mental health shortage area upon completion of training.

PRIMO Qualifying Health Care Professions

- Primary care physicians specializing in:
 - General Practice
 - Family Practice
 - Internal Medicine
 - Pediatric
 - Obstetric and Gynecological Care
- General Dentist
- Dental Hygienist

PRIMO Loan Amounts

The chart demonstrates the amount of the funding awarded to loan recipients based on the discipline and type of degree.

Amount Per Academic Year	Maximum Number of Loans	Student Status	Degree
\$5,000	Maximum 4 loans	Full-Time	Undergraduate or Dental Hygienist Students
\$3,000	Years 1 and 2 of a 6-Year Program	Part-Time	Undergraduate or Dental Hygienist Students
\$10,000	Years 3 through 6 of a 6-Year Program	Full-Time	Allopathic or Osteopathic Medical or Dental Program
\$20,000 - \$25,000	Maximum 4 Years of a 4-Year Program	Full-Time	Allopathic or Osteopathic Medical or Dental Program
\$20,000 - \$25,000	Maximum 3 Loans	Full-Time	Allopathic or Osteopathic Medical or Dental Program
\$10,000	Maximum 6 loans	Full-Time	Selected Primary Care Resident Physicians

LOAN FORGIVENESS

Upon completion of training, the PRIMO recipient fulfills their loan repayment obligation by earning forgiveness through qualifying employment in a Missouri HPSA experiencing shortages of primary care, mental health and dental health professionals.

- **Qualifying employment** is defined as full-time, direct patient care at a facility located in a Missouri HPSA. Recipients repay their PRIMO loans by working as a primary care provider in a Missouri HPSA location. Each loan contract requires a one-year service commitment. Service commitments cap at a five-year maximum, regardless of the number of loans awarded. The licensed PRIMO recipient must accept Medicaid, Medicare and work at an employment site that operates with a sliding fee schedule. The loan recipient must provide professional primary health care services to the general population.
- **Cash Repayment:** If the loan recipient defaulted on their loan obligation or decided to repay the loan, they must pay back the entire amount dispersed plus accrued interest. The loan begins accruing interest at the rate of 9.5% the date the loan is dispersed.

SFY21 Practicing PRIMO Recipients’ Surveys

In SFY21:

- 75% of practicing PRIMO recipients reported planning to remain:
 - ✓ in their current practice for an additional 30 years.
 - ✓ in their communities for an additional 40 years.
 - ✓ in rural practice for an additional 30 years.
 - ✓ in the state of Missouri for an additional 40 years.
- 25% of practicing PRIMO recipients reported planning to remain:
 - ✓ in their current practice for an additional three years.
 - ✓ in their communities for an additional 10 years.
 - ✓ in rural practice for an additional 10 years.
 - ✓ in the state of Missouri for an additional 20 years.
- 95% of practicing PRIMO recipients reported feeling that they do important work.
- 77% of practicing PRIMO recipients reported feeling that their practice is financially stable.
- 91% of practicing PRIMO recipients reported that they fully value the mission of their practice, and are able to provide a full range of services for which they were trained to perform.
- 75% of practicing PRIMO recipients reported that their total compensation package, including benefits, is fair.

In SFY21, PRIMO recipients continued efforts to increase access to care. Practicing PRIMO recipients, serving their service obligations, reported spending an average of 38 hours on clinical work, seeing an average of 80 patients per week. The majority of practicing PRIMO recipients are family medicine physicians serving in Missouri rural underserved areas.



Rural

15

Urban

6

Total

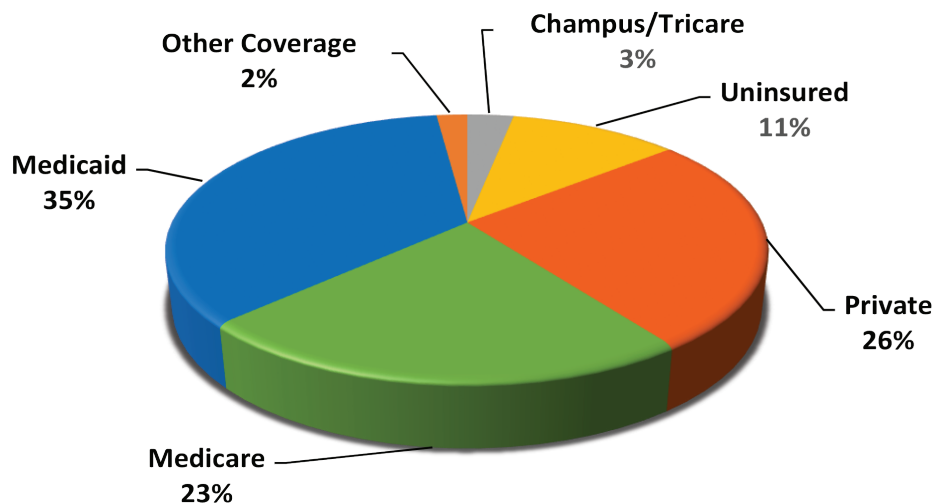
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SFY21 PRIMO Serving Service Obligations Rural/Urban

SFY21 PRIMO Service Obligations by Specialty Total 21

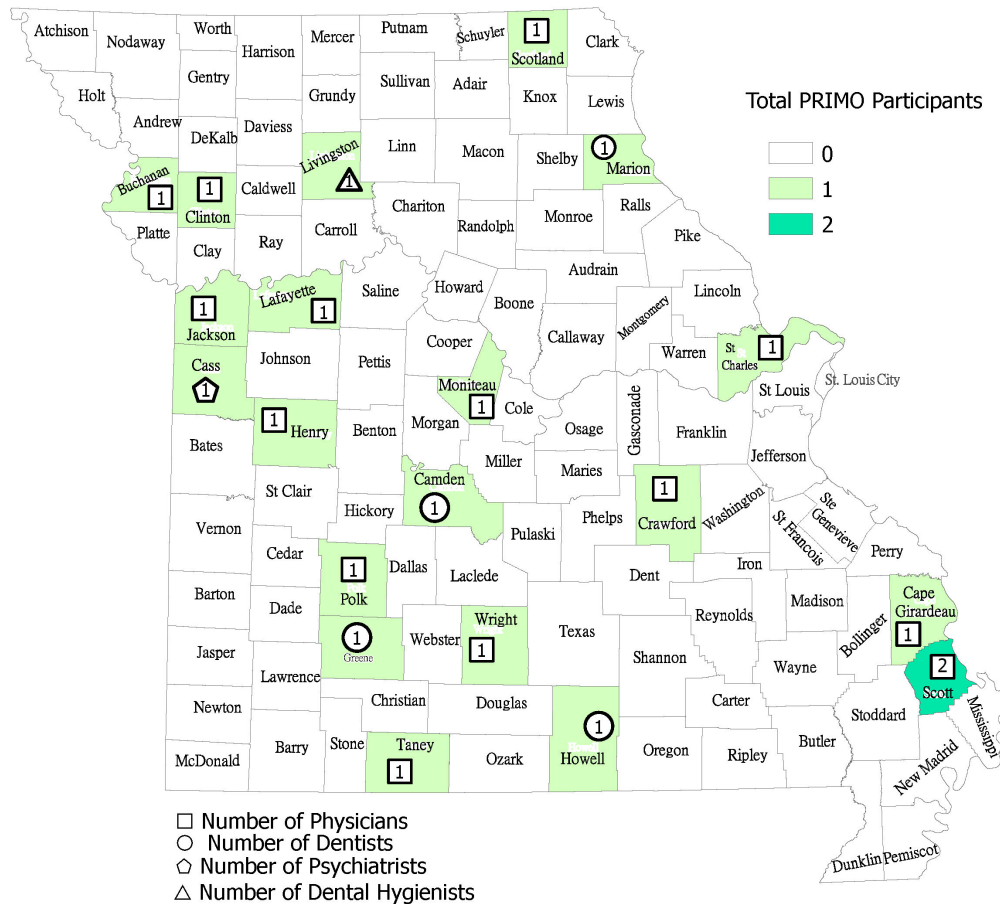


PRIMO SFY21 PAYER MIX



According to the PRIMO SFY21 Payer Mix chart, the percentages of each insurance and payer type are indicative of the population served. Medicaid represents the largest reimbursement and population served, at 35%.


Primary Care Resource Initiative for Missouri PRIMO Scholars Who Completed or Are Completing Obligation in 2021 Total = 21



Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services

Office of Primary Care and Rural Health

The map above demonstrates the county locations where PRIMO physicians, dentists, dental hygienists and behavioral health practitioners are currently earning forgiveness or have fulfilled their forgiveness requirements in SFY21. The map indicates 21 PRIMO recipients earned or are earning forgiveness on their PRIMO loans in SFY21.



Resources:

- Health Professional Loan and Loan Repayment Programs
<https://health.mo.gov/living/families/primarycare/hpl-lr/index.php>
- Health Professional Shortage Area
<https://data.hrsa.gov/tools/shortage-area>
- Missouri Primary Care Association
<https://www.mo-pca.org/>
- Missouri Hospital Association
<https://web.mhanet.com>
- Missouri Area Health Education Centers
<https://mahec.org/>
- MU School of Medicine- Rural Track Pipeline Program
<https://medicine.missouri.edu/education/rural-track-pipeline-program>

STUDENT LOAN REPAYMENT PROGRAM

The Student Loan Repayment Program (SLRP) seeks to improve primary care access by assisting rural and underserved communities with the recruitment and retention of primary care providers. The SLRP offers eligible health care providers the opportunity to receive repayment assistance for qualifying educational loans in exchange for a two-year minimum commitment to provide health care services at an eligible primary care practice site located in a federally designated Missouri HPSA. Learn more at <https://health.mo.gov/living/families/primarycare/loanrepayment/slrp.php>.

Awards for this program are financed through funding from HRSA of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, under grant HRSA-14-033, Affordable Care Act - State Loan Repayment Program, CFDA 93.165, a required 1:1 state match funding commitment made possible by an annual donation from the MHA, and recipients who have defaulted on their loans. In SFY21, 27 primary health care professionals were awarded loan repayment assistance to repay qualified educational debt.

SFY21 Practicing SLRP Recipients Surveys

In SFY21:

- 75% of practicing SLRP recipients reported planning to remain:
 - ✓ in their current practice for an additional 20 years.
 - ✓ in their communities for an additional 25 years.
 - ✓ in rural practice for an additional 30 years.
 - ✓ in the state of Missouri for an additional 30 years.
- 25% of practicing PRIMO recipients reported planning to remain:
 - ✓ in their current practice for an additional five years.
 - ✓ in their communities for an additional 10 years.
 - ✓ in rural practice for an additional 10 years.
 - ✓ in the state of Missouri for an additional 20 years.
- 100% of practicing SLRP recipients reported feeling that they do important work.
- 96% practicing SLRP recipients reported they fully value the mission of their practice.
- 84% practicing SLRP recipients reported that they are satisfied overall in their current practice.
- 80% practicing SLRP recipients reported their practice/organization is financially stable.
- 68% practicing SLRP recipients reported their total compensation package, including benefits, is fair.

In SFY21, SLRP recipients continued efforts to increase access to care. The SLRP recipients serving their service obligations, reported spending an average of 40 hours on clinical work and seeing an average of 77 patients per week. The majority of practicing SLRP recipients are dentists practicing in Missouri rural underserved areas.



Rural

37

Urban

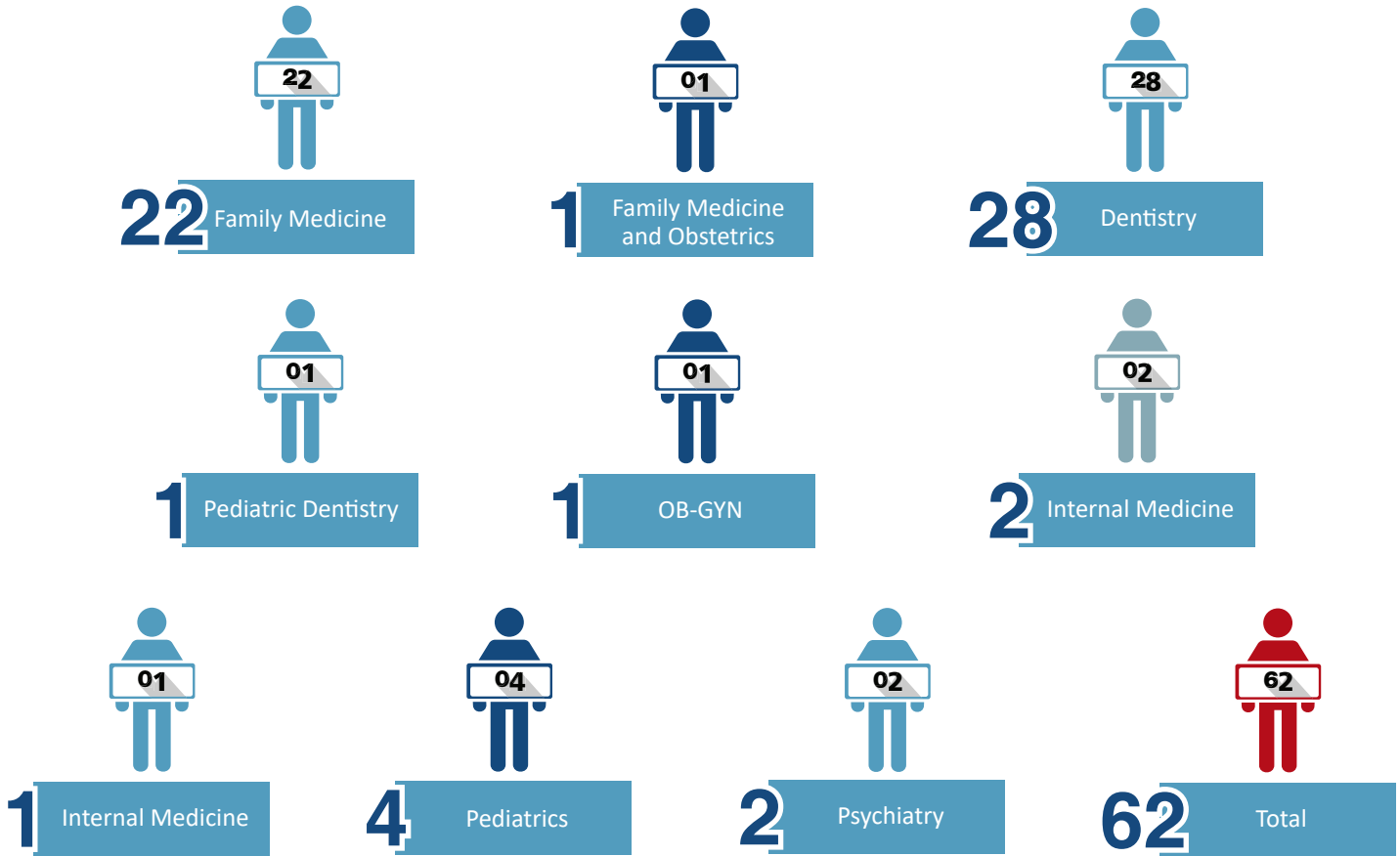
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Total

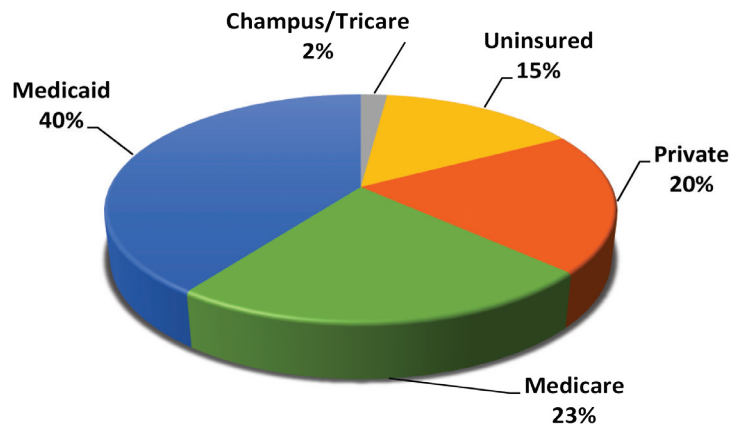
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SFY21 SLRP Serving Service Obligations Rural/Urban

SFY21 SLRP Service Obligations by Specialty Total 62



SLRP SFY21 PAYER MIX



According to the SLRP SFY21 Payer Mix chart, the percentages of each insurance and payer type are indicative of the population served. Medicaid represents the largest reimbursement and population served, at 40%.

RECRUITMENT AND PLACEMENT

The DHSS ORHPC collaborates with the Missouri Primary Care Association (MPCA) and the MHA to identify and address workforce shortage needs. The Missouri Health Professional Placement Services (MHPPS) program is a non-profit statewide health care program that specializes in workforce development, recruitment, and retention. The MHPPS partners with safety-net providers and health care systems to recruit and retain health care professionals in Missouri rural and underserved areas.

The tables below illustrate the number of opportunities available to health professionals demonstrating the number of opportunities posted and the number of placed health professionals.

SFY20 and SFY21 Practice Sites Opportunity Data Health Professional Employment Opportunities Posted

Opportunity Specialty	State Fiscal Year 2020	State Fiscal Year 2021	Total
Family Medicine	99	212	311
Internal Medicine	19	36	55
Internal Medicine & Pediatrics	10	16	26
OB-GYN	11	32	43
Pediatrician	17	18	35
Advanced Practice Nurse	24	24	48
Physician Assistant	4	0	4
Dental Hygiene	6	22	28
Dentist	73	101	174
Psychiatry	21	30	51
Other Mental Health Professional	11	46	57
Other Physician	40	68	108
Pharmacist	0	0	0
Totals	335	605	940

SFY20 and SFY21 Practice Sites Placement Data Health Professionals Placed in Missouri Health Care Facilities

Opportunity Specialty	State Fiscal Year 2020	State Fiscal Year 2021	Total
Family Medicine	1	3	4
Advanced Practice Nurse	1	1	2
Dentist	8	6	14
Totals	10	10	20

HEALTH CARE DELIVERY SYSTEMS AND DEVELOPMENT

The PRIMO Program seeks to improve the delivery of health care services by collaborating with statewide organizations, communities, and academic institutions to support the building of clinics, treatment centers, and other economically sustainable health care delivery sites.

Missouri School of Medicine, Rural Track Pipeline Program (MU-RTPP)

During SFY21, PRIMO provided continued funding to support the Rural Medical Services Grant with the MU-RTPP. The MU-RTPP works to increase the placement of primary care physicians in rural areas of Missouri through the recruitment and preadmission of medical students from rural areas of the state, while emphasizing student training at rural clinical sites. This upstream approach to provider training complements the intent of the PRIMO program to provide incentives to increase the number of primary medical care professionals and health care delivery systems in areas of need within Missouri.

The MU-RTPP has a successful record of producing physicians for the state of Missouri with 60.6% of participants practicing in Missouri of which 45.5% of those physicians practicing in Rural Missouri.

SFY21 Collaboration Accomplishments:

- Quarterly lectures to medical students, residents, and health professional students from institutions across the state were provided on topics including COVID 19 and Telehealth, Addressing Maternity Deserts, Opioid Abuse and Treatment as a Rural Provider, and COVID 19 and Its Impact on Rural Communities. Of the surveyed attendees of the Interprofessional Education lecture, 58% indicated increased interest in primary care practice, and 69% said they were more interested in practicing rural medicine.
- The Rural Immersion Program continues to unite medical and health care students with rural communities to examine the unique challenges rural communities face. This is a non-clinical four-day experience during which the students travel to a rural location to learn about the community and its rewards and challenges. In SFY21, the program took place in West Plains, MO with 20 participants.
- Presentations:
 - 1) Missouri Rural Health Association Virtual Conference:
“Accepting the Challenge to Improve the Health and Well-Being of Missourians: A Model within Extension and Rural Medical Education” and
“Innovative Collaborations and Community Outreach”
 - 2) Rural Health Symposium:
“Community-Centered Symposium on Rural Health & Economic Vitality”

Missouri Area Health Education Centers (MAHEC)

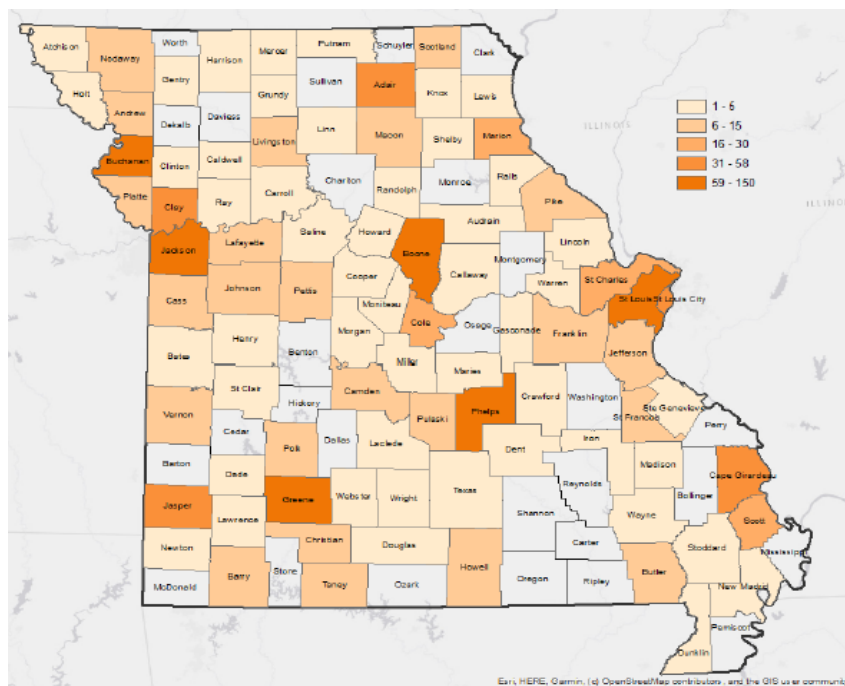
The DHSS ORHPC maintains a partnership and contract with the MAHEC. The MAHEC is comprised of seven regional centers and three medical schools. The MAHEC contract focuses on working with Missouri students to grow Missouri’s health care workforce. Students have explored and prepared for careers in the health field, many of which are now working health care providers in communities across Missouri. Students may participate in MAHEC at different levels of the pipeline as high school, undergraduate, or health professions training students. For many, their involvement in MAHEC activities continued from middle school through clinical training.



SFY21 Collaboration Accomplishments:

- 106 new pipeline students were identified.
 - All 106 students completed at least 10 hours of programming.
 - 40 of these students completed at least 25 hours of programming.
- 57 MAHEC participants began primary care residencies in Missouri.
- 53 clinical rotations were completed by 48 clinical training students: 2 dental students, 8 nurse practitioner students, 1 nursing student, 1 physician assistant student, and 36 medical students. The rotations took place in 22 training sites. 6 of the sites are located in suburban or urban settings, and 16 are located in rural settings. 46 of the rotations were in primary care disciplines, 2 were in dentistry, and 5 in psychiatry.
- 104 health professions students participated in interprofessional training experiences.
- Virtual M*A*S*H (Missouri AHEC Science & Health) Camps for teachers/counselors were held to build the capacity of middle and high school teachers/counselors to enhance their knowledge and skills in providing guidance and instruction to students on health career options and preparation.
- There were 82 MAHEC Scholars enrolled in the third cohort, 74 of whom are active. The MAHEC Scholars program is a 2-year interprofessional education program, designed to supplement their health professions curricula and better prepare them to provide care to rural and urban underserved populations. A total of 26 scholars from the second cohort completed Year-2 programming and have graduated from their respective health career programs.
- 38 MAHEC Scholars participated in a statewide virtual educational gathering that addressed COVID-19, a simulation activity focused on domestic violence, and breakout meetings to facilitate networking.
- The table below illustrates the employment locations of prior MAHEC students, as of June 2021.
- 1,323 MAHEC participants have gone on to health care careers in Missouri. 478 students are in rural counties, and 975 students are in Primary Care HPSAs.

Current Employment Locations of MAHEC's Prior Students



At least 1,323 MAHEC participants have gone on to health care careers in 87 of Missouri's 115 counties, 79 of these counties are Primary Care Health Professional Shortage Areas (HPSAs).



Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services
Office of Rural Health and Primary Care
P. O. Box 570
Jefferson City, MO 65102-0570
800.891.7415
Health.Mo.Gov

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