

## SHARP-I 2014 Q&A

### **Q. Why is this loan repayment program called SHARP-I 2014 and not just SHARP-I?**

A. SHARP-I refers to the original loan repayment program administered by the Department of Health & Social Services and funded in part by the federal government and in part by the State of Alaska and other non-federal sources. It is also referred to as “Traditional SHARP.” SHARP-I 2014 is similar to SHARP-I in many respects; however, differs in one important aspect: it requires a 25 percent employer match.

### **Q. What are the health care occupations included in SHARP-I 2014?**

A. Here is a list of the occupations eligible for SHARP-I 2014 funding:

- Physicians
- Physician Assistants
- Nurse Practitioners
- Registered Nurses
- Pharmacists
- Dentists
- Registered Dental Hygienists
- Clinical or Counseling Psychologists (Psy.D or PhD.)
- Licensed Clinical Social Workers
- Psychiatric Nurse Specialists
- Licensed Professional Counselors
- Marriage & Family Therapists

### **Q. What is the duration of the SHARP-I 2014 program.**

A. The program has received funding for four years.

### **Q. Do clinicians working for tribal health organizations in the SHARP-I 2014 program need to be licensed by the State of Alaska?**

A. No. They can be licensed in any state.

### **Q. Can clinicians currently participating in SHARP-II, or any other component of the SHARP Program, be eligible for SHARP-I 2014?**

A. No. Participation in SHARP-II, or any other loan repayment or incentive program, constitutes a concurrent service obligation, which is not allowed.

### **Q. Do practitioners working in hospitals qualify for SHARP-I?**

A. SHARP-I is overwhelmingly for Primary Care only, and that means that virtually all hospitalists are not eligible. There are some exceptions, but those are rare. The main exception is for those who work in critical access hospitals (CAHs). However, eligibility for any of the CAHs to be in SHARP depends also on whether they are in a federal HPSA.

### **Q. What behavioral health occupations are available in SHARP-I?**

A. Qualifying behavioral health occupations for SHARP-I include:

- Psychologist (PhD. or Psy.D)
- Clinical Social Worker (LCSW)
- Licensed Professional Counselor
- Marriage & Family Therapist

**Q. Is someone who is a LMSW and working toward his/her LCSW eligible for SHARP-I?**

A. Anyone can apply to SHARP. The issue is whether the practitioner is eligible to be considered for admittance to the program. That is based on whether the clinician-applicant will have his/her full and unencumbered licensure, at any point soon, either before or after the application process.

SHARP-I and SHARP-II benefits are not for clinicians who are still preparing to get licensure (e.g. MSWs who are in midst of clinical training, ongoing supervision, etc.

**Q. For the SHARP-I loan application, do I need to submit a lender/loan-holder form for all of my loans, or can I submit a form for just the lender/loan-holder I want to pay as a SHARP practitioner?**

A. You can submit only one lender form, if that is all that you want to have considered. Also, you must NOT have any other loans that you have other service obligations for.

**Q. Is there a special application I need to use if my current SHARP-I contract is ending and I want to continue in the new SHARP-I 2014 opportunity?**

A. There is no special renewal application. If you wish to continue in the SHARP Program you must use the SHARP-I 2014 Practitioner Application Form available on the SHARP website.

**Q. What is the difference of percentage of time spent on direct care and time spent on primary care?**

A. Direct care is the direct delivery of healthcare services to a patient which is not delegated to others. Only direct care service contacts are to be reported on SHARP-required Quarterly Work Reports regarding the Practitioner's delivery of healthcare.

Note that this could be clinic-based work, but direct care can also include hospitalists (full-time, on-floor) and those who work in other closed facilities. It could also include specialists, of all sorts, say an endocrinologist, or orthopedic surgeon, etc.

What direct patient care does not include is a clinical supervisor assigning the direct care work to a practitioner supervisee, (e.g. physician working with a PA or NP), and then reporting those patient care contacts as their own. So the PA or NP does the work, but the patient counts and the visit counts end up on the physician's report, for example. That is, at best, clinical supervision, and it is not direct patient care.

Notice that "care coordination" or "case management" might very well be included as direct patient care in that the practitioner is working with case-specific individual records (but not, for instance, managing a "data system" or other IT duties). Case conferences and treatment team meetings could also potentially included as part of "direct patient care" time.

Also any SHARP participant has some decent amount of leeway for doing some non-patient care tasks.

Primary care is the delivery of professional, *comprehensive* health services that include health education and disease prevention, *initial assessment* of health problems, treatment of acute and chronic health problems, and the *overall management of an individual's or family's health care services*. It entails *first-contact care of persons with undifferentiated illnesses*, *comprehensive care that is not disease or organ specific*, care that is *longitudinal in nature* and care that includes the *coordination of other health services*. Primary care dental services and primary care behavioral health services are included. Primary care is a sub-set of direct patient care. For instance, often someone can work full-time in a hospital, and do all direct patient care, but provide no primary care.

**Q. What information do I need to provide if the lender/loan holder (payee) changes?**

A. We need all of the following info-items listed by you, regardless of similarity of the new loan servicing (LS) agency to that of prior lender (payee):

- Your NAME – exactly as the NEW loan servicing agency has it listed
- Your ACCOUNT NUMBER – as it is listed with the LS agency
- The LS agency's postal PAYMENT ADDRESS
- Name of the LOAN SERVICING AGENCY
- That LS Agency's EIN (federal tax number)
- That LS Agency's PAYMENT Office phone number

**Q. What happens if my education debt is paid off before the end of the two-year contract period?**

A. The SHARP Program prorates the remaining debt across the two year contract period.

**Q. What should I do if I require additional pages for my loan information in Part B?**

A. Print off more than one copy of the Part B forms if needed. If you have more than one lender then you are going to be sending out more than one Part-B form, with your signature, to those separate lenders. You can send these additional forms as attachments to the email when you send in your completed application form.