

Date of Hearing: May 6, 2026

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Buffy Wicks, Chair

AB 1811 (Rogers) – As Amended March 19, 2026

Policy Committee: Health

Vote: 16 - 0

Urgency: No

State Mandated Local Program: No

Reimbursable: No

**SUMMARY:**

This bill defines a “health professional shortage area” (HPSA) to mean: (1) an HPSA designated by the U.S Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), (2) an area designated or recognized as an HPSA by DHHS on January 1, 2025, regardless of whether the area remains designated or recognized, or (3) an area determined by the Department of Health Care Access and Information (HCAI) to have a shortage of health professionals. The bill sunsets on January 1, 2035.

**FISCAL EFFECT:**

Minor and absorbable costs.

**COMMENTS:**

- 1) **Purpose.** This bill is sponsored by the Association of California Healthcare Districts (ACHD) and Rural County Representatives of California (RCRC). According to the author:

Health Professional Shortage Area (HPSA) designations are a critical tool for identifying where resources and workforce programs are most needed to serve underserved populations. In my district, there are many rural clinics and hospitals at risk of having their designation withdrawn. By safeguarding and expanding HPSA eligibility, this bill helps reduce health disparities, protect rural and tribal health infrastructure, and ensure that vulnerable communities continue to receive essential health and mental health services. AB 1811 ensures that these areas remain eligible for state programs that place physicians and other health professionals where they are needed most.

- 2) **Background.** HPSAs are geographic areas, population groups, or health care facilities that have been designated by the federal Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) as having a shortage of primary care, dental, or mental health providers. Generally, HRSA requires states to update HPSA designations every 3 years to ensure data accuracy, including provider data and geography. HRSA automatically processes HPSA designations and notifies states of updates and corrections needed to maintain the HPSA designations. If states do not update designations or no longer meet the criteria, HRSA withdraws the HPSA designation.

In September 2025, HRSA flagged 306 of 400 of California's designations as "proposed for withdrawal" (PFW), meaning the areas no longer meet the federal criteria to qualify as an HPSA. HRSA used a system that could not accurately read California's census information, leading to geography errors and requiring HCAI to manually correct errors. HCAI staff had until HRSA's March 8, 2026 deadline to update data and submit these requests to ensure HRSA officially withdraws HPSA status. HCAI was able to update data for 142 of the 306 PFW areas, and continues with a goal of submitting data for remaining PFW HPSAs by July. However, HRSA does not assure that requests to update a PFW HPSA after the March deadline will be approved in time to prevent a July 2026 withdrawal.

Areas that lose the HPSA designation lose the ability to benefit from federal and state programs that recruit and retain healthcare providers. At the state level, the HPSA designation signals prioritization for state resources. Additionally, once a designation is withdrawn, the service area must submit another application to be considered again. Examples of programs that would be affected include National Health Service Corps loan repayment and scholarship programs and Medicare Bonus Payments for physicians and psychiatrists.

**Analysis Prepared by:** Allegra Kim / APPR. / (916) 319-2081