

Comparing Geographies: HRSA/Dartmouth Atlas Primary Care Service Areas

Wisconsin Health Service Areas

The Wisconsin Health Service Areas were developed by Wisconsin AHEC for health workforce data analysis. The Health Service Areas also provide a useful geography for monitoring local program outcomes related to health workforce development and population health status. Each Wisconsin HSA consists of a hub city and surrounding municipalities. With some exceptions (in northern Wisconsin and border communities) each service area has a population of at least 10,000, with most of the service area population within 30 minutes travel time of the hub city. While most hubs include a hospital, inclusion of a municipality in a service area is determined by travel time to the hub, not actual hospital or clinic utilization data. A zip code version of the service areas has also been developed. For more information on the development of the service area geography, see *Introduction to Wisconsin Health Service Areas* at www.ahec.wisc.edu/workforce. The website also has maps and data related to the HSAs available for download.

HRSA/Dartmouth Atlas Primary Care Service Areas

The National Center for Health Workforce Analysis contracted with the Dartmouth Atlas of Healthcare to develop a Primary Care Service Area geography for the nation as a whole. This is a utilization-based approach to defining service areas, using Medicare utilization data to determine where a plurality of patients received primary care. HRSA uses the PCSAs on its Data Warehouse website. They are also used by the Bureau of Health Professions for workforce analysis.

The original version of the PCSAs was based on zipcodes and defined 163 PCSAs in Wisconsin. The 2013 update (Version 3.1) uses census tracts and defines over 180 PCSAs for Wisconsin, some too small for purposes of our workforce analysis and projections. The PCSAs reflect current utilization patterns and availability of providers and may change over time. They do not necessarily define ideal service areas in terms of travel time and distance. This PCSA overlay map provides a comparison to the Wisconsin Health Service Areas geography developed by Wisconsin AHEC.

For more information on the PCSAs, see <http://bhpr.hrsa.gov/healthworkforce/data/primarycareserviceareas/index.html>

