

**Resource Guide**  
**Nurse Practitioner (NP) Students Securing Preceptorships at**  
**Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs)**  
Upper Midlands Rural Health Network  
Rev. 1/6/2025

The number of Nurse Practitioner (NP) students who need clinical preceptorships is outpacing preceptor availability. This guide is designed to be a resource to help NP students fulfill their requirements. Lining up a preceptorship is very competitive, and students should begin the process as early as possible. First, check with your school to see what assistance they might provide in helping to line up preceptorships. For example, the USC College of Nursing has a Director of Clinical Partnerships as well as a Clinical Placement Coordinator.

Second, consider clinics that are not affiliated with large hospital systems or academic institutions. Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs) are independent primary care clinics that receive federal funds to provide healthcare services to underserved communities. They operate in both rural and urban areas designated as shortage areas. An NP's preceptor can be a nurse practitioner, physician assistant, or physician. At this time, the most challenging clinical placements for NP students are Behavioral Health, OB and Pediatrics. FQHCs often offer all of these services and are an untapped potential for students who need preceptorships.

**About FQHCs**

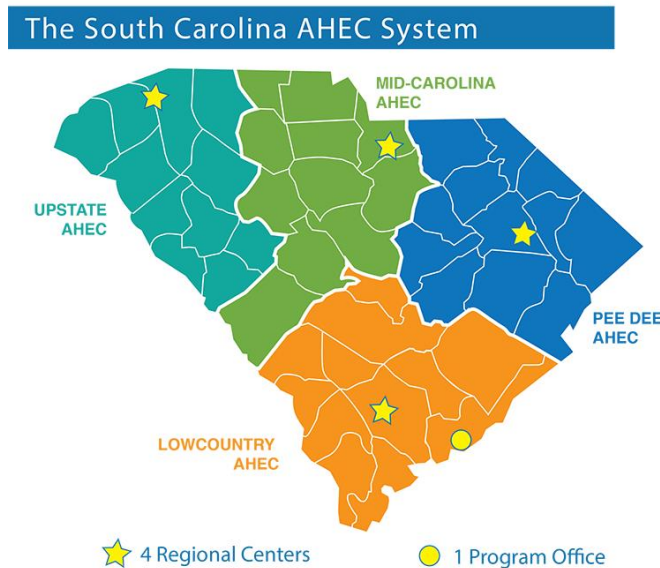
- FQHCs are important because they provide preventive care, including oral, mental health, and substance abuse services, to vulnerable populations. They offer a range of services, including: maternity and prenatal care, dental services, emergency care, and pharmaceutical services.
- FQHCs are governed by a board of directors that represents the patient population. They are supervised by the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) and receive funding from HRSA.
- FQHCs provide services regardless of a patient's ability to pay, using a sliding scale fee based on income and family size. No patient can be denied service for an inability to pay

If you have never needed the services an FQHC offers, you might not realize you have one in your own hometown. HRSA has a search tool on its website, called "Find a Health Center" which allows you to put in a zip code and find all of the Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs). <https://findahealthcenter.hrsa.gov/>

To learn how one FQHC recently enhanced its preceptorship program, watch the session titled "Increasing Preceptorship Opportunities for Nurse Practitioner Students at FQHCs," available at the SC AHEC Learning Portal <https://www.scahec.net/learn/>.

## Regional Resources

Another resource is one of the four regional Area Health Education Centers (AHEC). AHECs are most known for providing continuing education units (CEUs) after you are working in the field and need to keep credentials updated. However, they are a great resource for assisting with clinical rotations. Some of the AHEC offices even provide housing options, especially for clinical rotations located in rural areas. Below is a map of the four AHEC regions in South Carolina. Visit <https://www.scahec.net/> for more details.



The AHEC offices have at least one Health Professions Student Coordinator who maintains good relationships with the providers in their region. If there is a specific facility or region for your desired NP placement, reach out to the regional office that covers that area. If you don't have one identified yet, reach out to the regional office that covers where you reside. Below is the contact information to get started.

 <p><a href="#">Lowcountry AHEC</a></p> <p>Walterboro</p> <p>(843) 782-5052</p>	 <p><a href="#">Mid-Carolina AHEC</a></p> <p>Lancaster</p> <p>(803) 286-4121</p>	 <p><a href="#">Pee Dee AHEC</a></p> <p>Florence</p> <p>(843) 777-5343</p>	 <p><a href="#">Upstate AHEC</a></p> <p>Greenville</p> <p>(864) 349-1160</p>
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## **National Resources**

Consider becoming a member of the American Association of Nurse Practitioners® (AANP). <https://www.aanp.org/> There are student rates available, and membership offers opportunities for networking, subscriptions, and discounts. AANP has published a Preceptor Expectation Checklist and a Faculty Expectation Checklist to foster positive relationships and reduce barriers experienced in the preceptorship process. <https://www.aanp.org/student-resources-2/planning-your-np-education>

## **Other Resources**

There are a number of paid preceptor matching sites, which shows just how competitive this process can be. This can be an extremely costly option for students who may already be significantly financially constrained. Below is a listing of some of the companies that provide this service. Listing them here does not mean they are being endorsed.

- <https://www.nphub.com/>
- <https://www.matchnp.com/>
- <https://preceptortree.com/>
- <https://www.preceptorlink.com/>
- <https://www.clinicalmatchme.com/>
- <https://www.clinicalpreceptorrescue.com/>

## **Things to Consider**

Generally, NP students are working other jobs while completing the didactic and clinical rigors of the NP program. This model creates some challenges for nursing students in securing clinical placements. The sporadic schedule of time in the clinic can feel like an interruption to the regular flow of operations. Your actions can either exacerbate or minimize this. Be consistent and prompt with your schedule. If something changes outside of your control, be sure everyone that it affects is made aware of the changes. Keep a positive attitude and be a self-starter. You will get out of this experience what you put into it. Your preceptorship can serve as a long job interview, particularly if you are towards the end of your program. For additional tips about putting your best foot forward, visit <https://successnps.com/impressing-your-nurse-practitioner-np-clinical-instructor/>

## **Resources after graduation**

Working in underserved populations, such as at FQHCs, qualifies for tuition repayment programs such as:

- Nurse Corps Loan Repayment Program
- National Health Service Corps Loan Repayment Programs
- Substance Use Disorder Treatment and Recovery Loan Repayment Program
- Pediatric Specialty Loan Repayment Program
- Faculty Loan Repayment Program

These programs pay a significant portion of your student loans in exchange for a service commitment. Visit <https://bhw.hrsa.gov/funding/apply-loan-repayment> for guidelines and eligibility information.