



## **Federally Qualified Health Center Look-Alikes (FQLA)**

The major difference between Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs) and FQLAs are that FQHCs receive grant funding from the Federal government through section 330 of the Public Health Service (PHS) Act to provide services to uninsured users. Section 330 funding is the federal grant that Community Health Centers, Migrant Health Centers Health Care for the Homeless Programs, and Public Housing Primary Care Programs receive. While an FQLA must meet all of the eligibility requirements, it does not receive any 330 grant funding, is not eligible for Federal Tort Claims Act (FTCA) medical malpractice coverage or federal loan guarantees for capital improvements.

### **Requirements for FQLA Designation:**

- FQLAs must be a public entity or a private non-profit.
- FQLAs must be governed by a consumer majority board of directors. This means that at least 51 percent of board members must be active, registered clients of the health center. Board members must also be representative of the populations served.
- FQLAs must serve a Medically Underserved Area (MUA) or Medically Underserved Population (MUP). If an area does not have the MUA/MUP designation they can apply for it and can put in a FQLA application while the designation is being processed. If a MUA or MUP designation is not granted, the FQLA application will not be granted.
- FQLAs must provide primary, preventative, health care services for all age groups. FQLAs must also provide oral health, mental health, enabling services, hospital, and specialty care as necessary. For more information on required services, review Health Center Program Expectations (PIN 98-23).
- FQLAs must serve all patients regardless of ability to pay. FQLAs must use a sliding fee scale with discounts based on patient family size and income in accordance with federal poverty guidelines.

### **Benefits of being a FQLA include:**

- Enhanced Medicare and Medicaid reimbursement.
- Eligibility to purchase prescription and non-prescription medications at reduced cost through the 340B Drug Pricing Program.
- Automatic designation as a Health Professional Shortage Area (HPSA).

### **How to Apply for FQLA Designation:**

Existing clinics that meet FQHC requirements can request certification as FQLA by submitting an application. Information on the program requirements and application procedures are available on HRSA's website and can be found [here](#). It is a rolling application so organizations can apply at any time. The review process can take up to 4-6 months. As with FQHC applications, FQLA applicants must demonstrate community support for the project. Applicants should include Letters of Support from existing FQHCs and other community providers.



**Comparison of Federal Support for FQHCs and FQLAs**

	<b>Section 330 Health Centers</b>	<b>FQHC Look-Alikes</b>
Competitive application process	Yes	No
Receive direct funding from Federal government	Yes	No
Located in medically underserved area	Yes	Yes
Provide services based on ability to pay	Yes	Yes
At least 51 percent of governing board members represent active users of the health center	Yes	Yes
Provide a detailed scope of primary health care and enabling services	Yes	Yes
Enhanced Medicaid/Medicare reimbursement	Yes	Yes
Access to National Health Services Corp/J-1 Visa Waiver programs	Yes	Yes
FTCA coverage	Yes	No
340B drug pricing program	Yes	Yes
Federal loan guarantee program	Yes	No
Comply with BPHC Uniform Data System (UDS) and Performance Review Protocols	Yes	No