

# Understanding the Limitations of IHS Vacancy Rates Data

## Addendum to Briefing

OCTOBER 9, 2016



# Limitations of Data on IHS Vacancy Rates for Health Professions

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## What is included?

- Data includes IHS Headquarters, Areas, and Service Units operated by the U.S. federal government. It does not include Tribally operated or Urban program vacancy data.
- IHS does not necessarily compute vacancies in the same way as other organizations. Direct comparisons of vacancy rate data may be inappropriate if the underlying calculation or variables included differ.
- Like other health care organizations, IHS fills some vacant positions with contract staff.

## Reporting vacancies at IHS is challenging due to a number of factors such as:

1. Positions filled with short-term or long-term contractors may not be reported as vacancies
2. IHS may fill positions based on funding and need
3. Employees on IPAs and MOAs with tribal programs are included in total number of encumbered positions
4. Changes in available funding may cause discrepancies in vacancy data



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## Exactly what do these tables show?

- Slide 9 outlines the vacancy rates that were calculated based on the total number of funded, ready-to-fill health professional vacancies by IHS Area as of September 2016.
- Slide 10 outlines the target number of total positions (encumbered positions and vacant positions) and the number of positions that are vacant for each of the health professions broken down by IHS Area. This data was used to calculate the vacancy rates on the preceding slide. These actual numbers of total and vacant positions are also important in understanding and comparing vacancy rates across IHS Areas.



