



Agenda Item 9b: BH-CONNECT Workforce Initiative

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BH-CONNECT Workforce Initiative

- The Workforce Initiative will support the training, recruitment and retention of behavioral health practitioners to provide services across the continuum of care.
- Between 2025 and 2029, in partnership with the Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) and HCAI will invest up to \$1.9 billion in five workforce programs.
- Recipients of workforce funding will commit to serving Medi-Cal members living with significant behavioral health needs for 2-4 years.
- The state may carry unused workforce initiative expenditure authority from one year to the next. After Demonstration Year 2, the state may redistribute up to 30% of Workforce Initiatives funding across programs.



BH-CONNECT Workforce Programs

Medi-Cal Behavioral Health Student Loan Repayment Program

Medi-Cal Behavioral Health Scholarship Program

Medi-Cal Behavioral Health Recruitment and Retention Program

Medi-Cal Behavioral Health Community-Based Provider Training Program

Medi-Cal Behavioral Health Residency Training Program

Eligible Professions

Professions

Licensed providers with prescribing privileges

Non-prescribing associate level pre-licensure practitioners

Non-prescribing licensed practitioners

Non-prescribing certified behavioral health providers

Providers and practitioners that meet the California Medicaid State Plan, such as:

- Community Health Worker services
- Rehabilitative Mental Health services
- Substance Use Disorder Treatment services
- Expanded Substance Use Disorder Treatment services

Non-exhaustive list

Eligible Sites

Sites*

Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHC)

Community Mental Health Centers (CMHC)

Rural Health Clinics (RHC)

Settings with the following payer mix:

- Hospitals with 40 percent or higher Medicaid and/or uninsured population
- Rural hospitals with 30 percent or higher Medicaid and/or uninsured population
- Other behavioral health settings with 40 percent or higher Medicaid and/or uninsured population

To fulfill the full-time service commitment, qualified practitioners may work at a single organization, or hold part-time positions across multiple provider organizations, so long as all organizations meet the safety net setting definition in STC 6.1(a) (available at <https://www.dhcs.ca.gov/CalAIM/Documents/BH-CONNECT/BH-Connect-STCs.pdf>)

***Service commitments** must be fulfilled in these types of **safety net settings**.

Medi-Cal Behavioral Health Student Loan Repayment Program

This program facilitates awards to behavioral health professionals with educational debt:

- Licensed, prescribing behavioral health practitioners are eligible for up to \$240k in loan repayment; four-year service obligation
- Non-prescribing licensed or associate level pre-licensure practitioners are eligible for up to \$180K; four-year service obligation
- Non-licensed, non-prescribing practitioners, including SUD Counselors, Community Health Workers, Peer Support Specialists and Wellness Coaches are eligible for up to \$120K: service obligation:
 - \$20K or greater is four years
 - \$10K - \$20K is three years
 - Less than \$10K is two years

Medi-Cal Behavioral Health Scholarship Program

This program facilitates access to scholarships and certificates to individuals pursuing behavioral health degrees or certifications:

- Individuals participating in educational programs to become licensed, prescribing behavioral health practitioners are eligible for up to \$240K in scholarship funding; four-year service obligation
- Individuals participating in educational programs to become non-prescribing licensed practitioners are eligible for up to \$180K; four-year service obligation
- Individuals participating in educational programs to become non-prescribing, non-licensed practitioners are eligible for up to \$120K; four-year service obligation:
 - \$20K or greater is four years
 - \$10K - \$20K is three years
 - Less than \$10K is two years
- Scholarships will be awarded directly to the education or training institution

Medi-Cal Behavioral Health Recruitment and Retention Program

Eligible settings may receive funding to:

- Provide recruitment bonuses of up to \$20,000
- Provide retention bonuses of up to \$4,000 each
- Provide bonuses of up to \$50,000 per individual to support students completing required training in advance of their final year of education
- Provide up to \$1,500 per practitioner to cover licensing or certification fees
- Support supervision hours of pre-licensure or pre-certificate practitioners (up to \$35,000 per year)
- Cover backfill costs to support behavioral health practitioners receiving training in Evidence Based Practices
- Recruitment and retention service obligations:
 - \$20K or greater = four years
 - \$10K - \$20K = three years
 - Less than \$10K = two years

Medi-Cal Behavioral Health Community-Based Provider Training Program

This program facilitates grants to organizations to support the development of community-based providers such as SUD Counselors, Community Health Workers, and Peer Support Specialists

- Training programs may receive up to \$10,000 per individual to train Alcohol or Other Drug Counselors, Community Health Workers and Peer Support Specialists; funds may be used for:
 - Program tuition and required program fees for course curriculums necessary to achieve the professional titles of Alcohol or Other Drug Counselor
 - Community Health Worker or Peer Support Specialist
 - Textbooks and supplies as required by the educational program curriculum
 - Professional exam fees and certification or licensure costs
- Requires 3-year full-time service obligation for qualified individuals receiving this support

Medi-Cal Behavioral Health Residency Training Program

- This program facilitates up to \$250K in awards for residency programs to expand the number of graduate medical education slots for:
 - General Psychiatry residency
 - Child Psychiatry fellowships
 - Addiction Psychiatry/Addiction Medicine fellowships
- Funds pay resident and fellowship salaries
- Requires residents and fellows to participate in the Medi-Cal Behavioral Health Student Loan Repayment Program during their residency/fellowship with a four-year service obligation requirement after graduation

BH-CONNECT Budget and Timeline: Indicative

Program	Total
Behavioral Health Scholarship Program	\$234,000,000
Behavioral Health Student Loan Repayment Program	\$530,000,000
Behavioral Health Recruitment and Retention Program	\$966,000,000
Behavioral Health Community-Based Provider Training Program	\$85,000,000
Behavioral Health Residency Program	\$85,000,000
Total	\$1,900,000,000

	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029
Behavioral Health Student Loan Repayment Program	Jul Launch				
Behavioral Health Residency Program	~Sep Launch				
Behavioral Health Scholarship Program		Q1 Launch			
Behavioral Health Community-Based Provider Training Program		Q1 Launch			
Behavioral Health Recruitment and Retention Program		Mid 2026 Launch			

Stakeholder Engagement

- Current Completed/Planned Engagements:
 - Behavioral Health Task Force (January 2025)
 - California Behavioral Health Planning Council (January 2025)
 - HCAI Behavioral Health Advisory Committee (Feb 2025)
 - DHCS-Behavioral Health Stakeholder Advisory Committee (Feb 2025)

- Does the Council have any recommendations for further engagement?