

Agenda Item 5:

HCAI Workforce Program Update

Presenter: Libby Abbott, Deputy Director, HCAI Health Workforce

HCAI Health Workforce Approach

Develop, support and expand a health workforce that:

- Serves medically underserved areas
- Serves Medi-Cal members
- Reflects and responds to the needs of California's population



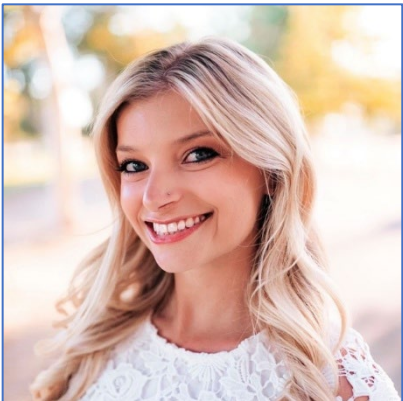


Health Workforce High Level Updates

Staff Updates–We Are Growing!



- Rural Health Transformation Program (RHTP/CalRHT)
 - In May, HCAI welcomed **Jennifer Hernandez** as the new Program Director for the CalRHT Program, marking a significant moment as the program prepares for its next phase.
 - HCAI is preparing to release details on new CalRHT funding opportunities, signaling continued investment in regional health workforce efforts.



- New Health Workforce Policy team member
 - HCAI Health Workforce has its first Health Equity Specialist, **Sharene Gouveia**, who also joined the team in May.
 - Will collaborate closely with the HWET Council team to elevate California's health workforce equity priorities to the Council.

Proposition 35: LMCCs

Labor Management Cooperation Committees (LMCCs)

- LMCCs are partnerships between health care employers and labor unions that use a shared labor-management governance model to:



**Strengthen
Collaboration**



**Improve Recruitment
and Retention**



**Address Workforce
Challenges**

What is the role of HCAI?

- HCAI will administer, oversee, and evaluate the \$150M LMCC grant program supporting select LMCCs serving Medi-Cal communities from July 2026 through June 2030

Workforce 26-27 Budget Highlights

- **Uncompensated Care Program**—\$30 million one-time General Fund, over three years, to support reproductive health services and gender-affirming care services.
- **Gender-Affirming Care Provider Network and Capacity**—\$10 million General Fund in 2026-27 and \$8 million General Fund each in 2027-28 and 2028-29 to provide capacity grants to gender-affirming care services providers.
- **Abortion Practical Support Program**—\$10 million one-time General Fund, over three years, for grants to non-profit organizations and reproductive health care providers to improve access to reproductive care.
- **Behavioral Health Services Act**—\$48 million for the first year of the 2026-2030 Workforce Education and Training Plan.



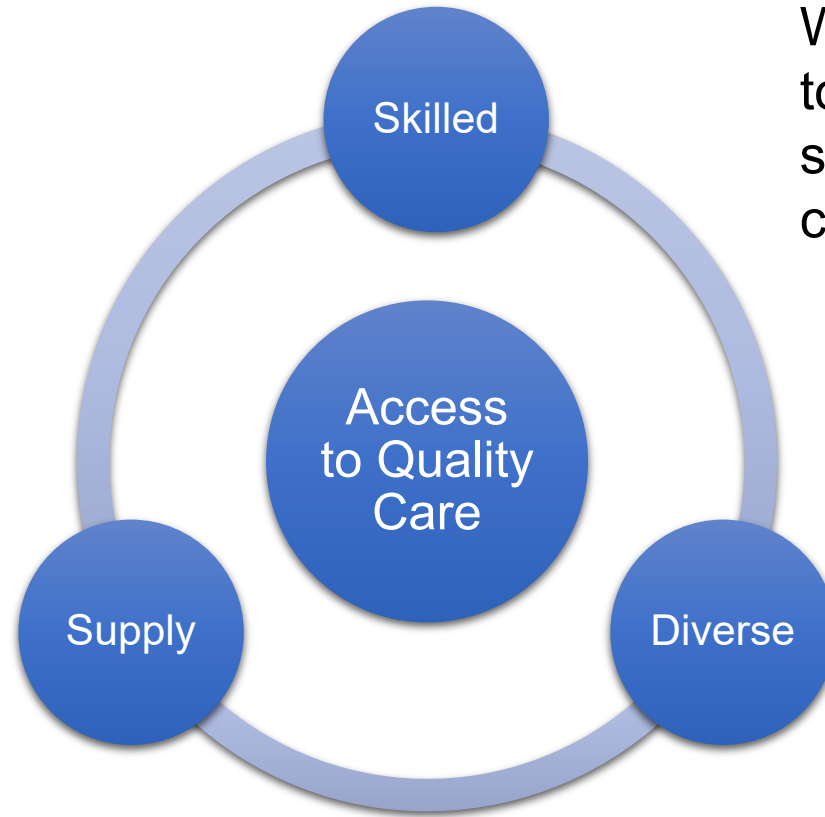
Behavioral Health Services Act Funding & WET Plan

BHSA & WET Plan

- The **Behavioral Health Services Act** (BHSA) allocates at least three percent of BHSA funds for behavioral health **workforce initiatives**.
- Specifies the **Five-Year Workforce Education and Training (WET) Plan** is the vehicle for articulating BHSA **funding priorities**.
- Requires the California Behavioral Health Planning Council (CBHPC) to **approve the Plan**.

BHSA WET Plan Expected Outcomes

There is a sufficient **supply** of professionals in the county behavioral health system, including areas with greatest need



Workforce has the **skills** needed to serve individuals with significant behavioral health conditions

Workforce is **diverse** and reflects the lived experiences of the communities they serve

WET Plan: 5 Objectives

#	Objective Names	Community Revised Objective Definitions
1.	Expand Existing Workforce Skills	Expand on-the-job training for existing behavioral health workforce to develop the skills needed to serve individuals with significant behavioral health conditions. Establish a training model that can be replicated at scale in the future as needed to reflect evolving policy context.
2.	Educate & Train Future Licensed Professionals	Expand affordable academic-based education and training with clinical supervision that prepares future licensed behavioral health workforce , including funding support for students.
3.	Scale & Optimize Deployment of Non-Licensed Workforce	Provide training and support transition-to-practice opportunities for individuals and provide technical assistance to employers to ensure effective deployment of the non-licensed workforce .
4.	Enhance Career Pathways & Advancement	Develop and implement standardized behavioral health career pathways to increase awareness, support upward mobility , and promote a diverse and sustainable workforce .
5.	Recruit & Retain Workforce	Recruit and retain behavioral health professionals in county and county-contracted organizations.

Advance diversity and equity across all.

Community & Partner Input Timeline

Phase 1: Community Engagement

- July to August 2025
- 21 statewide community convenings
- 287 community participants
- Broad spectrum of outreach

Phase 2: Deep Dives

- January to April 2026
- 25+ meetings and workshops
- 60+ community, academic, and state partner SMEs
- 1:1s with BHSA Workforce Panel

Phase 3: Plan Feedback and Approval

- March to June 2026
- Convened BHSA Workforce Panel
- Held public presentations and published the WET Plan for public comment (May)
- CBHPC* meetings to preview (April) and approve (June)

2025

2026

Resulted in:

- Key themes
- Initial draft investment objectives and draft programs
- Prioritized list of areas for further investigation

Resulted in:

- Final 5 Objective framework, including refined language
- Further fleshed out program ideas, by objective

Resulting in:

- WET Plan refinement
- WET Plan approval and publication (July 3)
- Activate funding & accountability (under development)

*California Behavioral Health Planning Council

Public Comment Process

Public Comment

- From May 12 – May 29, a public comment period was open, and members of the public were able to submit comments via MS Forms

Release of Draft BHSA 2026-2030 WET Plan Public Webinar

- On May 20 and May 21, HCAI hosted two public webinars
- In total, nearly 400 members of the public attended
- 110 questions were asked and answered live

Analysis of Public Comment

- From May 29 – June 3, HCAI staff conducted an analysis of all public comments received

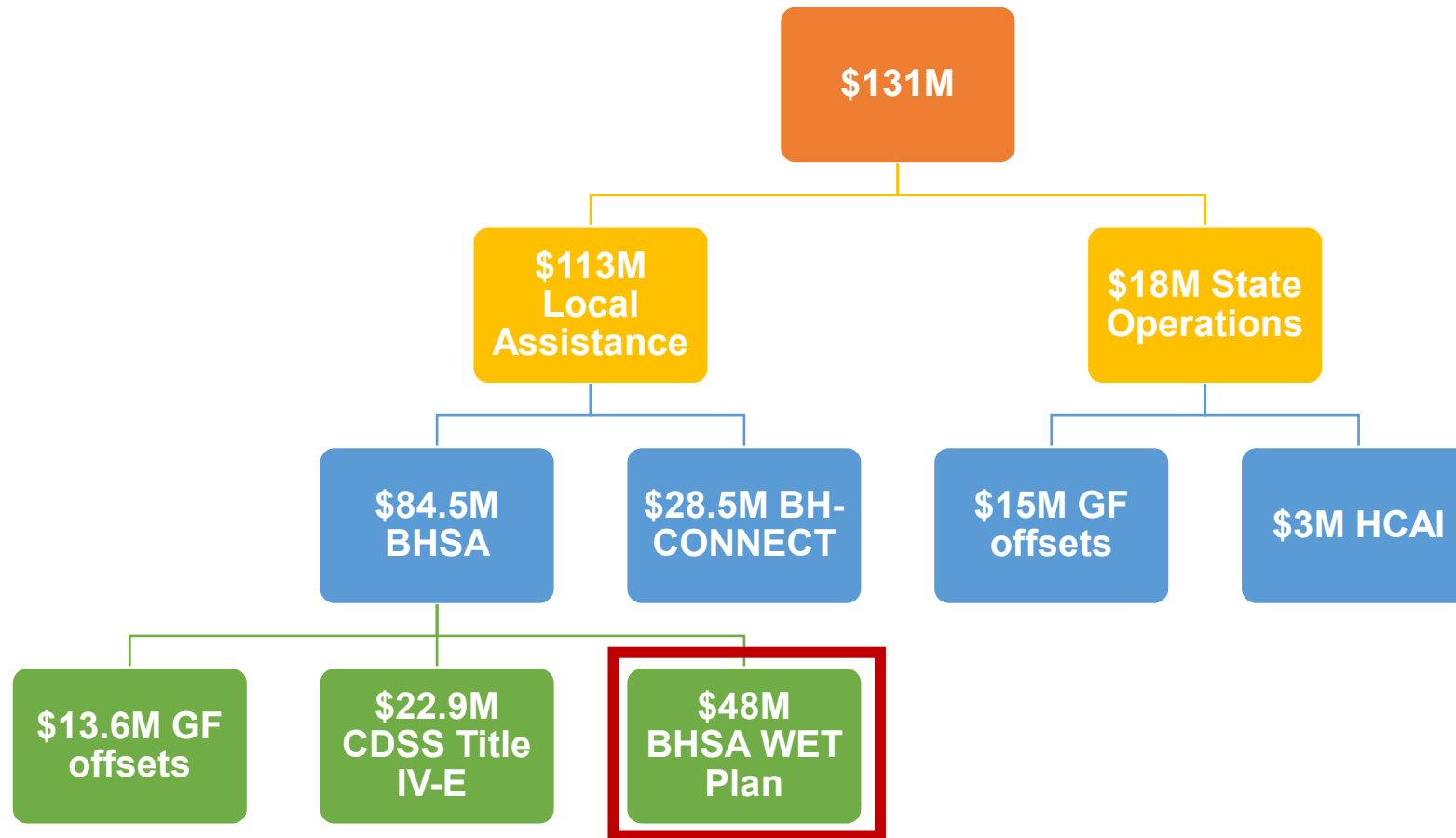
Presentation of Public Comment Summary

- On June 4, HCAI presented a summary of public comment to HCAI BHSA Workforce Panel

Review and Approval of the Final WET Plan

- **June 19 | WET Plan Approved by CBHPC** (with amendments)
- Named Occupational Therapists & Physician Assistants (Objectives 1 & 2)
- Committed to Regional Partnerships evaluation review
- **July 1 | Official Launch**
- Final WET Plan published
- Five-year implementation period begins

BHSA FY 26-27 Budget Allocation



Budget Changes to BHSA 2026-2023 WET Plan

	FY 26/27	FY 27/28
<u>Current</u> HCAI Specific Allocation: BHSA 2026-2030 WET Plan	\$51M (\$48M local assistance)	\$71M (\$67.5M local assistance)
<u>Prior</u> HCAI BHSA Budget for Final Plan	~\$100M	~\$100M

The Way Forward

FY 26-27 Planning (Summer 2026)

- Align on prioritized programs within budget envelope
- Develop implementation timeline
- Begin detailed program design

Ongoing Partnership

- Convene the BHSA Workforce Panel and key partners for program design, reflection, and learning
- Update HWET Council, including at November 2026 meeting



Behavioral Health

Behavioral Health Grant Cycles



Primary Care—Training and Education in Addiction Medicine Fellowship Scholarship Program

\$6,882,000 for primary care physicians who have been accepted into the UC Irvine Primary Care—Training and Education in Addiction Medicine Fellowship.

Open: April 1, 2026

Close: October 31, 2026

Education Expansion: Success Story

In 2022 and 2024, HCAI awarded grants for a combined total of **\$7.5 million through 2029** to **Chico State University School of Social Work** to expand their educational capacity.

The grants:



Strengthen capacity to recruit, educate, and support social work students—particularly in high-need and underserved regions by offering **stipends, peer mentoring, wraparound academic support, specialized coursework, distance learning, and field placements**



Expand Master of Social Work (MSW) training capacity: 41 unique students supported to date*



24 bilingual Hmong- and Spanish-speaking MSW students enrolled



Support culturally responsive, community-rooted professionals, including bilingual training for Spanish and Hmong speaker students, of which nearly 50% are first generation, and 33% are local rural residents in the North State



Build connections with alumni-supported bilingual learning and mentoring community for local networking

Source: Quan, et al, Strengthening California's Health Workforce: Early Lessons from the Workforce for a Healthy California Initiative. Interim Research Report. HealthForce at UCSF for the Department of Health Care Access and Information, March 2026. (Unpublished.)

* In Part-time, full time, advanced standing (AS) programs, distance learning (DL), and ASDL enrollment (a new component). A total of 80 students will be recruited over the life of these two grants.

Data Source: OHWD Grants Management Branch. The CSU Chico School of Social Work website is <http://www.csuchico.edu/swrk/>

Education Expansion: Success Story

“The funding from HCAI has enabled us to build an outstanding behavioral health training program serving rural Northern California and, especially, our Spanish and Hmong-speaking communities. Our behavioral health training program is being recognized across the Chico State campus and throughout rural Northern California.”

**- TangJudy ("Judy") Vang, PhD, LCSW,
Chico State School of Social Work**



Photo courtesy of CSU Chico School of Social Work Master's Degree Program.

<https://www.csuchico.edu/academics/college/behavioral-social-sciences/departments/school-social-work/masters-info-application.shtml>

Program Outcomes

MBH-Scholarship Program

Cycle: February – March 2026



Types of Awards: Scholarships for individuals pursuing behavioral health degrees.

Number of awards: 1,257 (Projected)

Dollars awarded: \$51,407,944 (Projected)

MBH-Fellowship Training Program

Cycle: March – May 2026



Types of Awards: Funding for fellowship programs opening new training positions.

Number of awards: 2 (Projected)

Dollars awarded: \$715,900 (Projected)



MBH-Student Loan Repayment Program

**Cycle: July 2025 – August 2025,
Cohort 4 Awarded June 2026**

Types of Awards: Loan repayment grants for behavioral health providers serving in Medi-Cal Safety Net settings.

Number of awards, Cohort 4: 148 (Projected)

Number of awards, total: 1918

Dollars awarded, Cohort 4: \$11,963,417

Dollars awarded, total: \$160,578,610

BH-CONNECT Workforce Initiative



Medi-Cal Behavioral Health Community-Based Provider Training Program

Builds behavioral health workforce by funding training for AOD Counselors, Community Health Workers, and Peer Support Specialists

Open: March 16, 2026
Close: April 30, 2026



Medi-Cal Behavioral Health Recruitment and Retention Program

Funds organizations to recruit and retain Medi-Cal behavioral health professionals through bonuses, supervision support, and certification/training assistance

Open: June 1, 2026
Close: July 15, 2026

Certified Wellness Coaches – Milestones



- As of June 30th, there are **4,749 Certified Wellness Coaches (CWCs)**.
- HCAI is developing partnerships with 53 California community colleges, California state universities, and private nonprofit universities to develop **HCAI-Designated Education Programs**. Currently, eight schools (three community colleges and five universities) have been officially designated.
- The **CWC Apprenticeship Demonstration** project secured partnerships with 12 employers, two unions, and is currently on track to have 22 enrolled apprentices by August 2026.
- HCAI published a **Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS)** framework to outline the scope of services of CWCs and other school-based mental health providers within school-settings.

A healthcare professional, a young Black woman with her hair in braids, wearing a white lab coat, is standing and smiling while talking to an elderly white woman with short white hair and glasses. The elderly woman is sitting up in a hospital bed, wearing a white hospital gown. The background shows a typical hospital room with medical equipment on the wall and a bedside table with a green apple.

Primary Care

Primary Care Grant Cycles



Song-Brown Primary Care Residency

\$31M for organizations to support, expand, or establish primary care residency programs that train physicians to serve underserved areas.

Open: June 18, 2026

Close: August 3, 2026

Primary Care Loan Repayment



Steven M. Thompson Loan Repayment Program

\$950,000 to STLRP is to increase the number of appropriately trained physicians providing direct patient care in a qualified area and facility in California.

Open: May 1, 2026

Close: June 5, 2026

A photograph of a smiling nurse with short curly hair, wearing a blue patterned scrub top and a stethoscope, holding a tablet. She is looking at two young girls, one with long brown hair and one with blonde hair in a ponytail, who are looking at the tablet. The background is a bright, out-of-focus clinical setting.

Nursing

Nursing Loan Repayment Cycle



Registered Nursing and Licensed Vocational Nursing

\$1,638,000 to increase the number of appropriately trained nurses providing direct patient care in a qualified facility in California.

Open: May 1, 2026

Close: June 5, 2026

Nursing Scholarship Cycles



Registered Nursing and Vocational Nursing Programs

\$345,000 to increase the number of appropriately trained nurses providing direct patient care in a qualified facility in California.

Open: September 1, 2026

Close: October 2, 2026

Nursing Programs

Program	Total Available Funding Cycles Beginning FY Sep. 1, 2026	Service Obligation
Associate Degree Nursing Scholarship Program	\$50,000	One Year
Bachelor of Science Nursing Scholarship Program	\$195,000	One Year
Licensed Vocational Nurse to Associate Degree Nursing Scholarship Program	\$50,000	One Year
Vocational Nurse Scholarship Program	\$24,000	One Year
Bachelor of Science Nursing Loan Repayment Program	\$1,521,000	One Year
Licensed Vocational Nurse Loan Repayment Program	\$117,000	One Year





Cross Cutting Programs

Loan Repayment and Organizational Grants



California State Loan Repayment Program

Increases the health workforce practicing in federally designated California Health Professional Shortage Areas

Open: July 15, 2026

Close: September 15, 2026



Health Careers Exploration Program

Strengthens educational and social foundations with organizational grants to support underrepresented individuals interested in healthcare careers

Open: August 2026

Close: October 2026