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Department of Health Care Access and Information

Agenda Item 5:

HCAI Workforce Program Update

Presenter: Libby Abbott, Deputy Director, HCAI Health Workforce

HCAI's Vision for California's Health Workforce

Purpose Statement

HCAI enables the expansion and development of a **health workforce that reflects California's diversity** while addressing **supply shortages and inequities.**

We do this by administering programs and funding and publishing actionable data about California's health workforce and training.

Desired Outcomes

A California with...

A **sufficient supply of health workers**, ensuring all Californians have access to **equitable, affordable, and quality healthcare**

A **health workforce that reflects the diversity of California**, increasing **economic opportunities** for providers from underserved communities

Improved patient outcomes and quality of life for communities

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

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Proposition 35: LMCCs

Labor Management Cooperation Committees (LMCCs)

HCAI will oversee a $150M investment in Labor-Management Cooperation Committees (LMCCs) grant program, including approving awards and executing grant agreements. Funding will support labor-management partnerships to expand workforce training, strengthen career pathways, and improve recruitment and retention of healthcare workers serving Medi-Cal members.

- November 2026 - Contract Start Date
- March 2027 - Grant Cycle 1 Awards
- March 2028 - Grant Cycle 2 Awards
- March 2030 - Final Evaluation Report

Fiscal Year 26-27 Budget Highlight: Gender Affirming Care

New investments to expand safe, accessible gender affirming care for California's children and youth.

- **Gender Affirming Care Services for Children and Youth ($10 million):** This funding will support the delivery of gender affirming care services for youth under age 18 for Medicaid and age 19 for CHIP, including medical and pharmacy services specifically ineligible for federal Medicaid and CHIP funding as of October 13, 2026.
- The program will focus on minimizing disruptions and safeguarding access to care for impacted Medi-Cal members through key partnerships and engagement with culturally competent medical and pharmacy providers throughout California.
- For questions about funding or provider support related to these services for Medi-Cal members, please contact HCAI at genderaffirmingcare@hcai.ca.gov. Our team can assist with information and guidance regarding continued access.



Behavioral Health

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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.

Closed: October 31, 2026

UC Irvine will announce awards in Spring 2027.

Certified Wellness Coaches – Milestones

- As of October 2026, there are 5,396 Certified Wellness Coaches (CWCs).
- HCAI developed partnerships with 58 California Community Colleges, California State Universities, and private nonprofit universities to develop HCAI-Designated Education Programs. Currently, 12 schools (3 community colleges and 9 universities) have been officially designated.
- In partnership with LWDA, the California Community College Chancellor's Office (CCCCO), and Chabot Community College, the associate degree-based Behavioral Health Wellness Coach Apprenticeship Program officially launched in 2026. Currently, 23 apprentices are enrolled in the program with another 30 targeted for Fall 2026 and early 2027.

Certified Wellness Coaches – Data

- Among Certified Wellness Coaches to date, 52% of Coaches identify as Hispanic, compared to roughly 40% of the state's population. About 11% of our Coaches identify as Black, compared to about 5% of the population.
- Gaps remain for Asian, Non-Hispanic people; men; people with disabilities; LGBTQ+ individuals; and rural counties.
- 83% of scholarship recipients are first-generation college students; over half are pursuing their first postsecondary degree; recipients represent 19 languages.
- Early certification largely came through the Workforce Pathway, reflecting strong interest from existing workers; the Education Pathway is building a longer-term pipeline.



Darrell Ezell, CWC

Certified Wellness Coaches – Impact

CWCs are delivering the services envisioned under the Children and Youth Behavioral Health Initiative (CYBHI), providing benefits for students and schools. Among six early employer adopters, over 160 CWCs served 7,500+ students across more than 240 sites in six months.
These services resulted in improvements in student:

- Belonging & safety
- Emotional regulation & engagement
- Attendance
- School capacity & staff support

> *"She's a really great listener and she helps break down the problem into seeing things from other people's perspectives and then also bringing it back to your perspective...and then she's really good at coping techniques."*
>
> *—Sierra Child and Family Services youth*

Qualities identified that help CWCs succeed:

- Experience working in schools
- Organizational and task management skills
- Ties or familiarity with the community
- Lived experience and relatability
- Independence and problem-solving skills

> *"[My role is about] listening to their [students'] stories and about the weekend. Its not talking over them… its just a thousand little ways to build a relationship. Its early little positive thing[s] I can say… just being a calm positive person."*
>
> *—Butte County Office of Education CWC*

Source: CYBHI Special Topic Report – Certified Wellness Coaches: Implementation Findings and Considerations for the Future



Primary Care

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Primary Care Grant Cycles



Song-Brown Primary Care Residency

$31,000,000 for organizations to support, expand, or establish primary care residency programs that train physicians to serve underserved areas. An additional $3,931,000 in flexible funding is also available to support the primary care program.

Closed: August 3, 2026

HCAI will announce awards in November 2026.

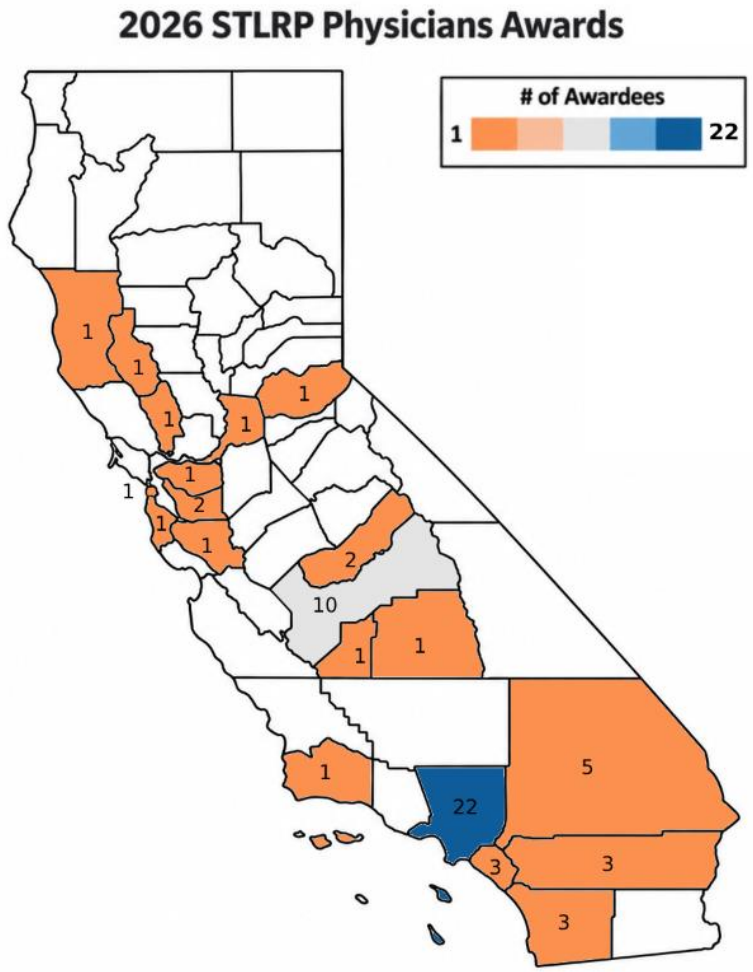
Primary Care Loan Repayment

Steven M. Thompson Loan Repayment Program

$6,185,526 to increase the number of appropriately trained physicians providing direct patient care in a qualified area and facility in California.

Closed: June 5, 2026.

- # of Awardees: 62
- Awarded Amount: $6,185,526



Loan repayment for physicians in Central Coast Counties

- HCAI received $1,900,000 million to support loan repayment awards for physicians practicing in San Luis Obispo, Monterey, Santa Cruz, and San Benito counties.
- The funding is intended to support physician retention in Central Coast communities facing a high cost of living yet lack primary care access.
- HCAI plans to incorporate these funds into the next Steven Thompson Loan Repayment Program (STLRP) cycle, anticipated to launch in May 2027.

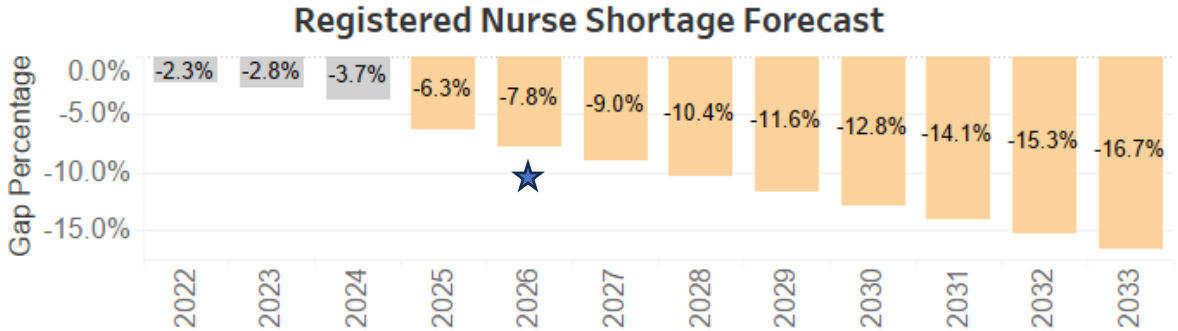


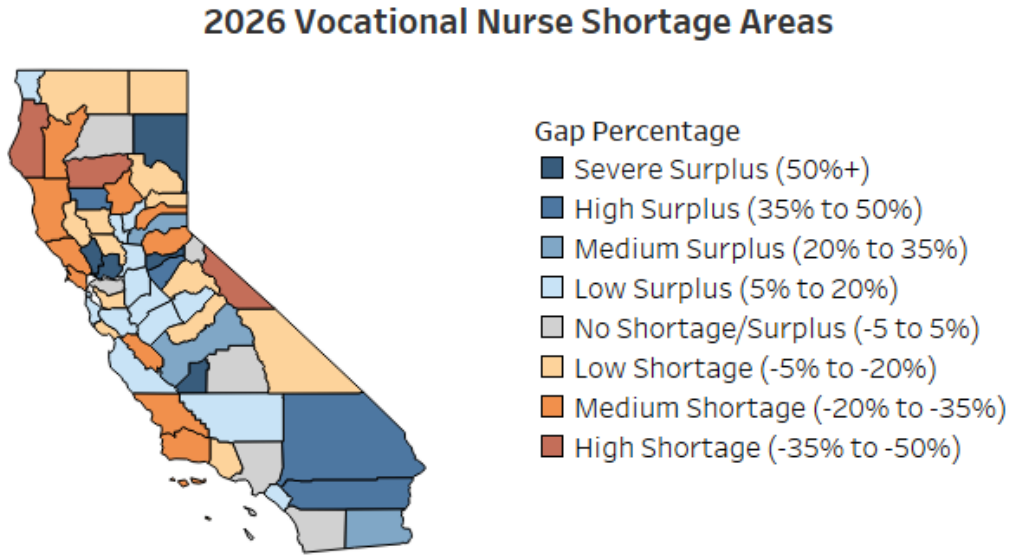
Nursing

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Nursing Supply and Demand Model

- The statewide shortage of Registered Nurses[1] has been steadily increasing. By 2033, it is estimated that 50 counties will face a shortage of -5% or more, and ~61,000 additional providers will be needed to meet statewide demand.
- There is a current[2] need for ~23,600 additional Registered Nurses to meet our statewide demand.
- Currently[2], there is a maldistribution of Vocational Nurses; 26 counties are showing a surplus of providers while 26 counties are facing a shortage of providers.
- By 2033, the statewide surplus of Vocational Nurses will resolve, but the maldistribution of providers will remain.





[1]Registered Nurses includes Registered Nurses, Certified Nurse Specialists, Public Health Nurses, and Psychiatric Mental Health Nurses. See HCAI's Modeling Methodology documentation for additional details.
[2]The term current reflects modeling estimates and projections for 2026 from HCAI's Supply and Demand Modeling for California's Nursing Workforce

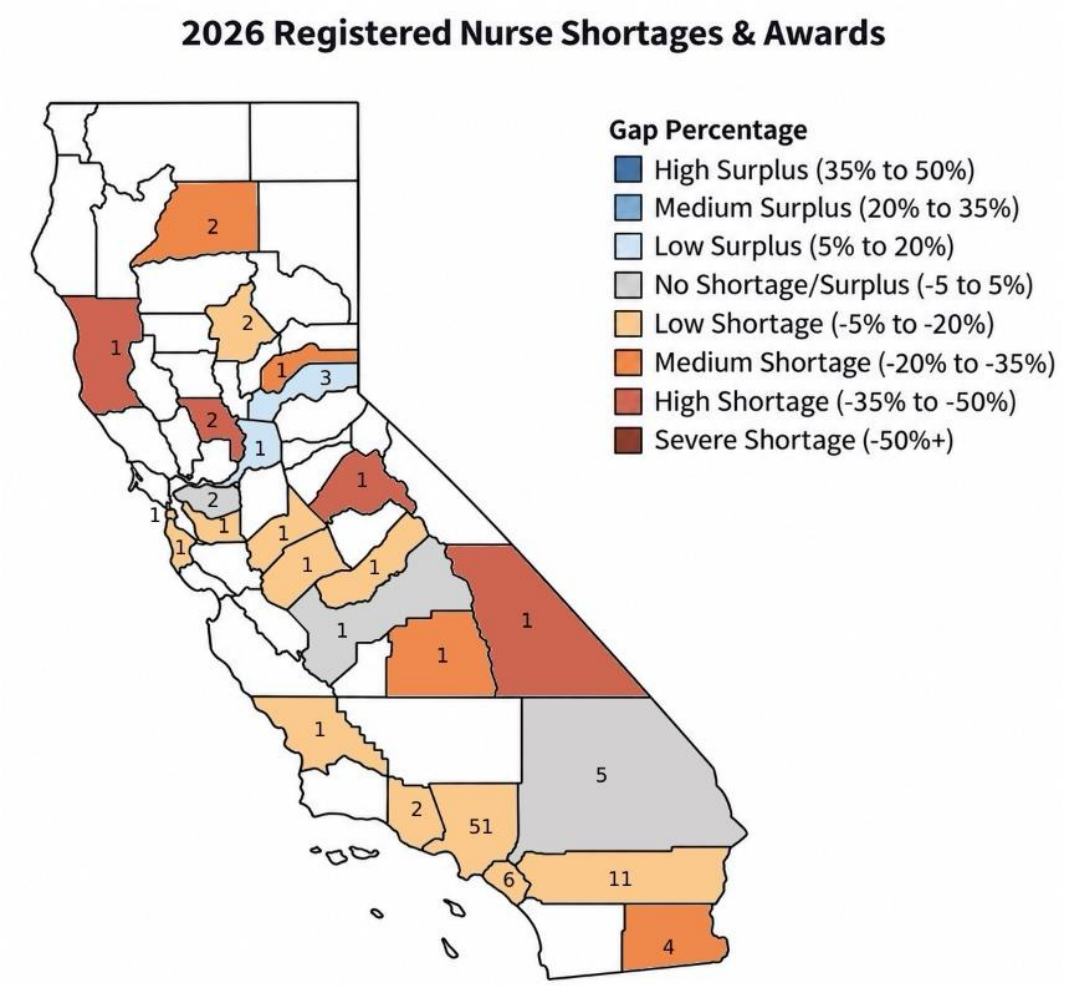
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BSN LRP Awards

$1,521,000 to increase the number of appropriately trained nurses providing direct patient care in a qualified facility in California.

Closed: June 5, 2026

- # of Awardees: 105
- Awarded Amount: $1,489,827
  - Additional points awarded for applicants who are working in and HCAI identified shortage areas.
  - Over 88% of awards went to HCAI identified nursing shortage areas

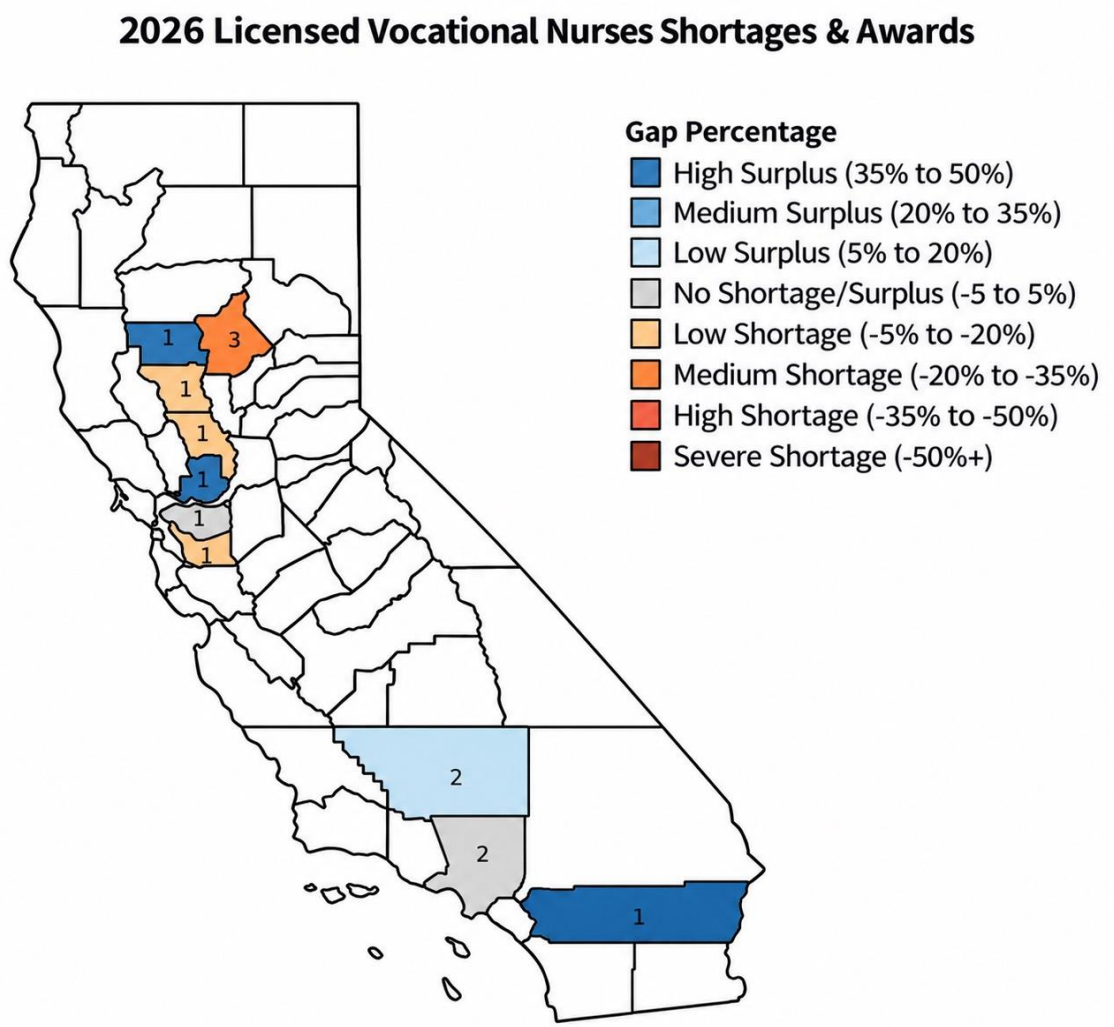


LVN LRP awards

$118,000 to increase the number of appropriately trained nurses providing direct patient care in a qualified facility in California.

Closed: June 5, 2026

- # of Awardees: 14
- Awarded Amount: $109,954



Nursing Scholarship Opportunities

- Programs provide financial support to students pursuing nursing education in exchange for a service commitment providing direct patient care in an underserved community or qualified facility in California.
- Supply and demand findings will be applied to scoring and decision making.
- Applications opened on September 1, 2026, and closed on October 2, 2026. Awards will be announced January 2027 for:
  - Vocational Nurse Scholarship Program - Total $24,000 for award
  - Associate Degree Nursing Scholarship Program - Total $50,000 for award
  - Licensed Vocational Nurse to Associate Degree Nursing Scholarship Program - Total $50,000 available for award
  - Bachelor of Science Nursing Scholarship Program - Total $195,000 for award

Nursing Grant Cycles



- The Song-Brown Registered Nurse (RN) application cycle opened on September 9, 2026, and closed on October 22, 2026.
- $2,725,000 available for award.
- Awards will be announced January 2027.
- Supply and demand findings will be applied to scoring and decision making.



Cross Cutting Programs

Loan Repayment

California State Loan Repayment Program (CA-SLRP) increases the health workforce practicing in federally designated California Health Professional Shortage Areas

The application cycle closed on September 15, 2026.

Total $1,087,990.00 available for award.

Awards will be announced January 2027.



Pathways Programs

Health Careers Exploration Program (HCEP) Strengthens educational and social foundations with organizational grants to support underrepresented individuals interested in healthcare careers.



Applications opened on August 14, 2026, and will close on October 16, 2026.

Total $300,000 available for award.

Awards will be announced January 2027.

Health Professions Pathways Program – Population Health Investment (HPPP-PopHI)

- The application cycle opened August 14, 2026, and will close on October 16, 2026.
- Total $4,800,000 available for award.
- Awards will be announced January 2027.