



## Item 5

# Health Workforce Updates

**Presenter:** Libby Abbott, Deputy Director, HCAI Health Workforce

# Chair/Vice Chair Transition



- **Chair:** The previous Vice-Chair, Dr. Nader Nadershahi, has assumed the position of Chair. Dr. Nadershahi has served on the Council since December 2021.



- **Vice-Chair:** Vernita Todd will assume the position of Vice-Chair. Ms. Todd has served on the Council since September 2021.

# 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



# Upcoming Grant Cycles



## Peer Personnel Training and Placement Program (PPTPP)

Funds organizations to recruit, train, and place individuals with lived experience into certified peer roles.

**Open:** January 9, 2026

**Close:** March 6, 2026



## Medi-Cal Behavioral Health Scholarship Program (MBH-SP)

Scholarships for individuals pursuing behavioral health professions in exchange for full-time service in Medi-Cal safety-net settings.

**Open:** February 2, 2026

**Close:** March 16, 2026



## Medi-Cal Behavioral Health Fellowship Training Program (MBH-FTP)

Expands fellowship training for child and adolescent psychiatry, addiction psychiatry, and addiction medicine in Medi-Cal safety-net settings.

**Open:** March 16, 2026

**Close:** April 15, 2026

# Upcoming Grant Cycles Cont.



## Medi-Cal Behavioral Health Community-Based Provider Training Program (MBH-CBPTP)

Funds individuals to become AOD Counselors, Community Health Workers, or Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialists in exchange for service in Medi-Cal safety-net settings.

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



## Medi-Cal Behavioral Health Recruitment and Retention Program (MBH-RRP)

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

**Open:** Spring 2026  
**Close:** Summer 2026



## Song-Brown Primary Care Residency (PCR)

Funds 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



# Behavioral Health

# BH-CONNECT Workforce Initiative

## Five Medi-Cal Behavioral Health Programs:

### Student Loan Repayment



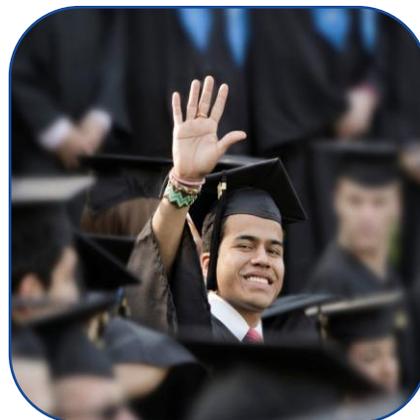
- Cycle 1, Jul. 2025
- As of Dec. 31, 2025, 1,615 awards: ~\$133M
- Cycle 2, May 2026

### Residency and Fellowship Training



- Cycle 1, Jul. 2025
- Five awards, ~\$15M
- 17 training positions
- Cycle 2, Mar. 2026

### Scholarship



Cycle 1, Feb. 2026

### Community-Based Provider Training



Cycle 1, Mar. 2026

### Recruitment and Retention

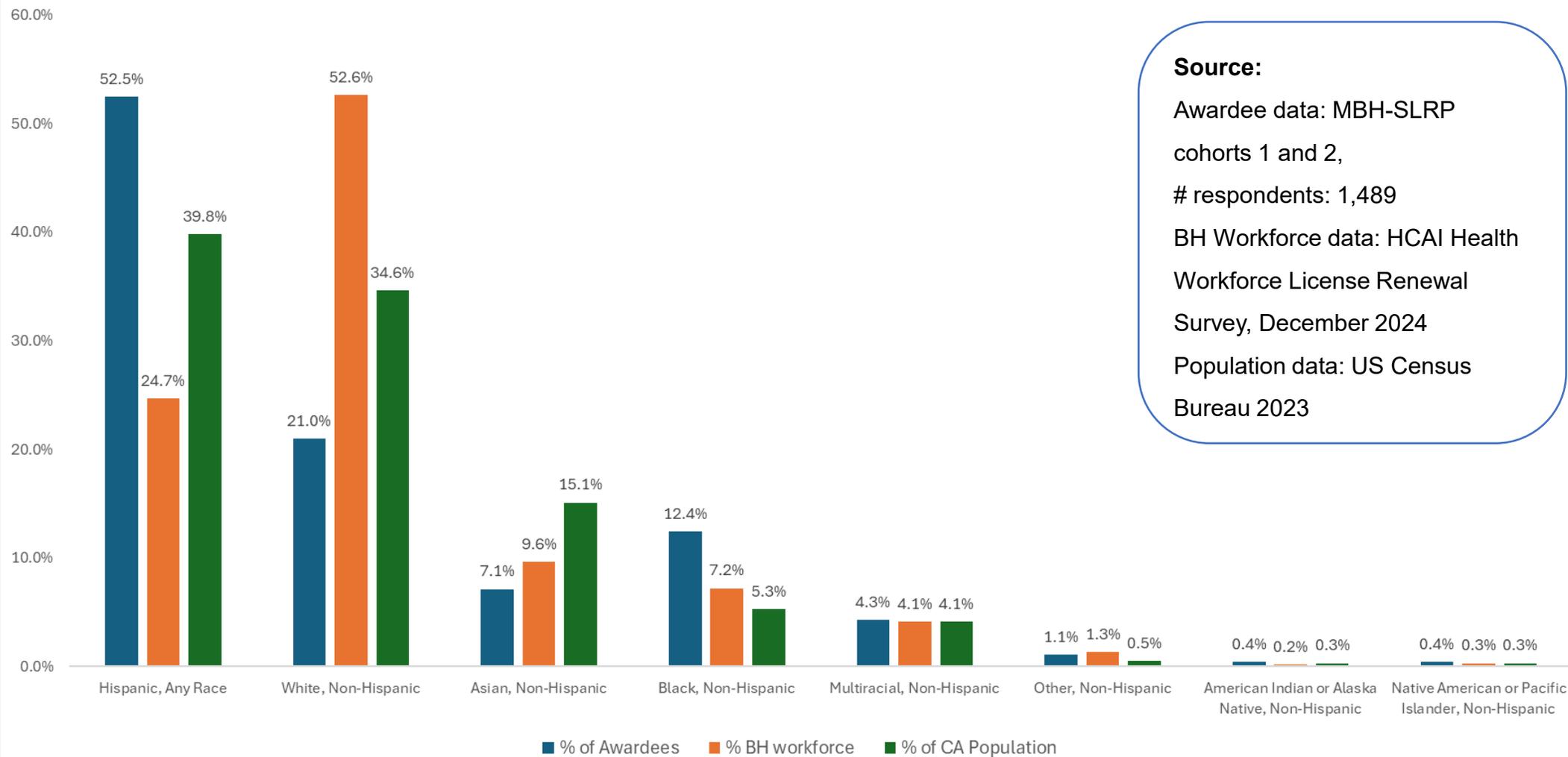


Cycle 1, Spring 2026

Launch Dates for 2026

# MBH-SLRP Awardee Demographics

Race/Ethnicity



**Source:**

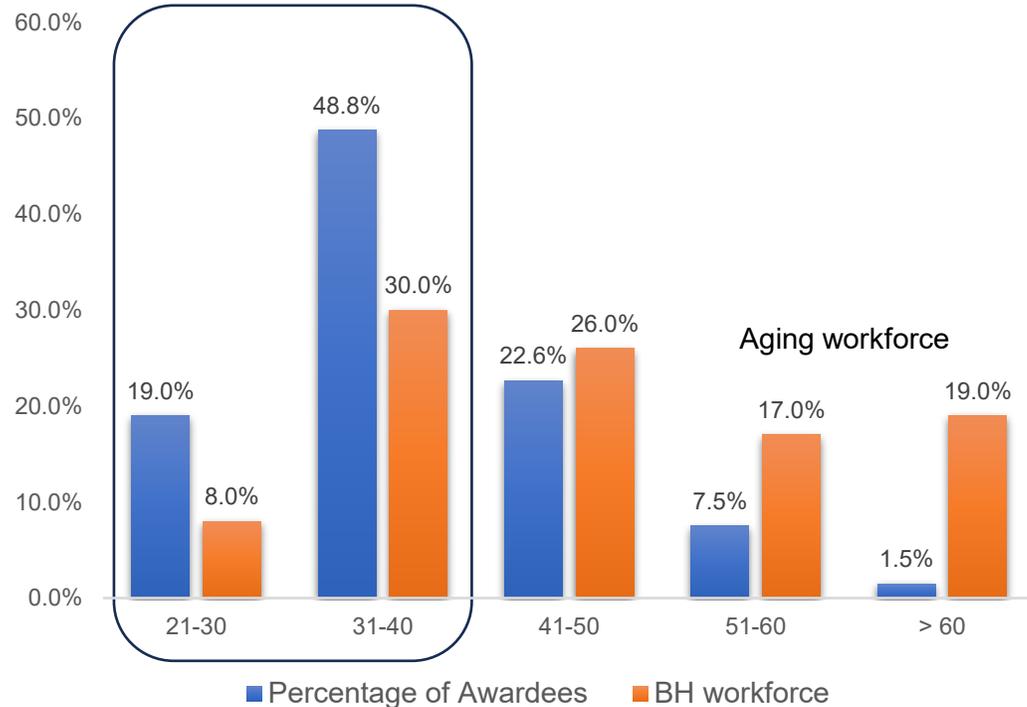
Awardee data: MBH-SLRP cohorts 1 and 2,  
# respondents: 1,489

BH Workforce data: HCAI Health Workforce License Renewal Survey, December 2024

Population data: US Census Bureau 2023

# MBH-SLRP Awardee Demographics

## Age Distribution



## Languages Spoken

Census Language Group	% of CA Population	% of Behavioral Health Workforce	% Awardees
English Only	55.9%	69.4%	48.89%
Spanish	<b>28.2%</b>	<b>20.8%</b>	<b>41.64%</b>
Asian and Pacific Islander	<b>10.0%</b>	<b>4.1%</b>	<b>4.37%</b>
Other Indo-European Languages	4.8%	4.7%	1.88%
Other	1.1%	2.5%	1.48%

### Source:

Awardee data: MBH-SLRP cohorts 1 and 2, # respondents: 1,489

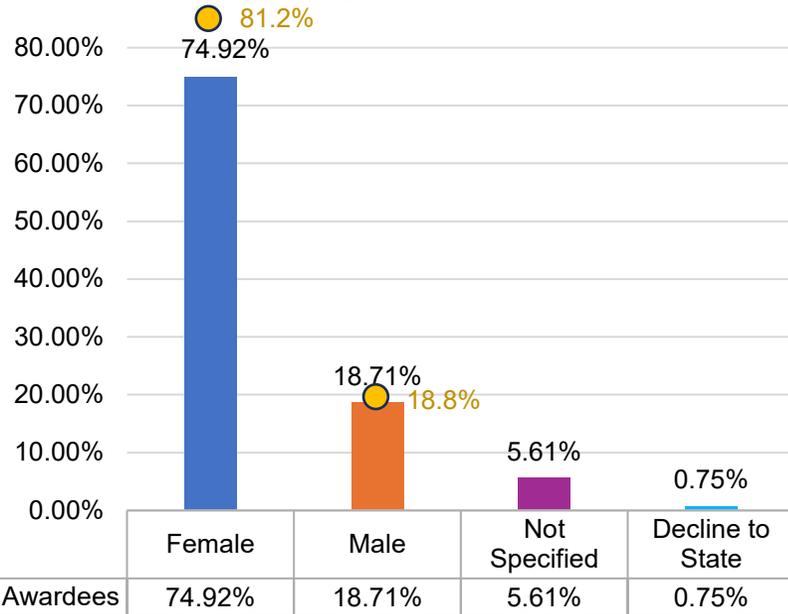
Workforce age data: HCAI Health Workforce License Renewal Survey, January 2026

Workforce languages spoken data: HCAI Health Workforce License Renewal Survey, December 2024

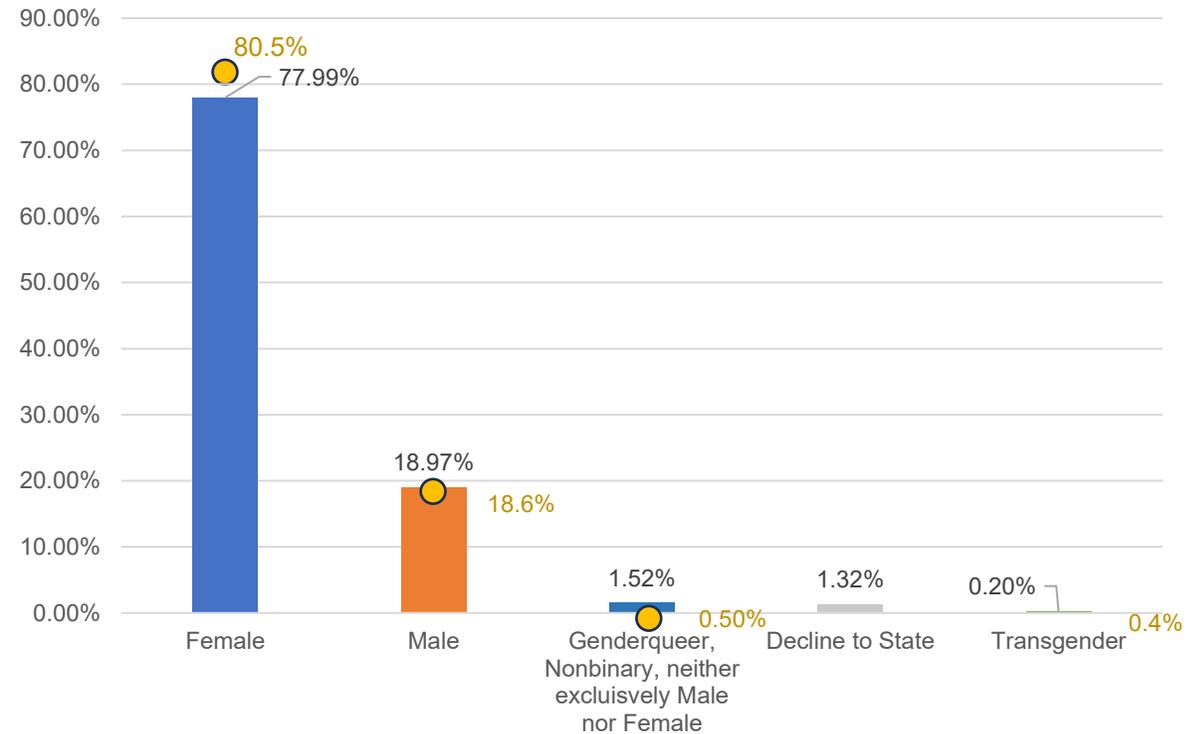
Population data: US Census Bureau 2023

# MBH-SLRP Awardee Demographics

## Sex Assigned at Birth



## Gender Identity



● BH workforce

### Source:

Awardee data: MBH-SLRP cohorts 1 and 2, # respondents = 1,489

BH workforce: Health Workforce Research Data Center Annual Report To The Legislature, January 2026

# Certified Wellness Coaches



- Funded by the Children and Youth Behavioral Health Initiative – Five-years \$787M, with \$237M for Certified Wellness Coaches (CWC)
- Currently in partnership with 40 Community Colleges, California State Universities, and private nonprofit universities to develop **HCAI-Designated Education Programs**, with another 12 contracts under development.
- Developing a sustainable earn-and-learn model for CWC certification through apprenticeships, with 45 apprenticeships anticipated at three community colleges by September 2026.
- Launched **recertification application** process, resulting in 29 early recertifications before their 2-year deadline.

# CWC 2-Year Anniversary Celebration!

- February 19, 2026, celebrating over 4,000 Coaches statewide!
- Engaging speakers included the First Partner (via video), CalHHS Secretary Kim Johnson, CYBHI Director Dr. Sohil Sud, and HCAI leadership



- The hybrid event drew 500+ virtual attendees via Zoom, and 60+ in-person attendees
- Moving stories from Coaches, educators, employers, and youth
- Testiment to the values gained in providing support to California's children and youth

**Two years strong.  
The work continues.**



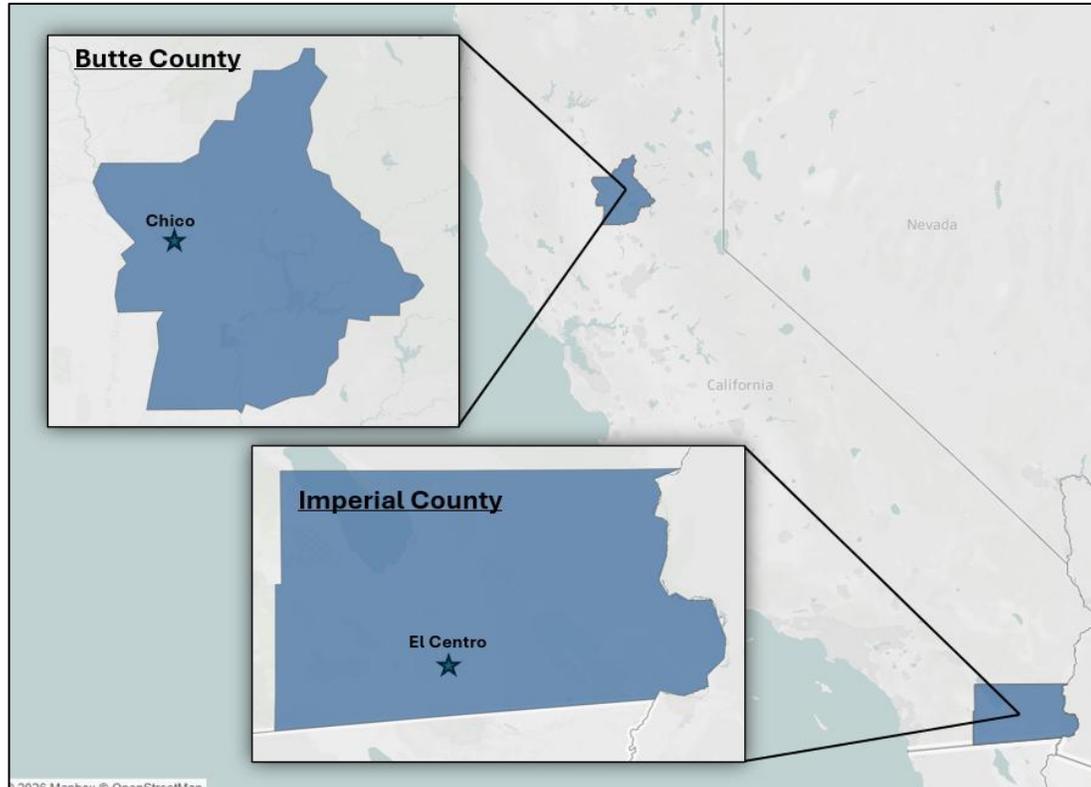
# CWC Scholarship Recipients Demographics

## STATEWIDE PROGRESS: MAKE UP OF RECIPIENTS

Certified Individuals (N = 2,544)	Scholarship Recipients (N = 638)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 82% entered through workforce pathway</li><li>• 77% certified at Level II</li><li>• 63% have a BA or BS degree</li><li>• 23% have a graduate degree</li><li>• 10% have an AA degree</li><li>• 82% identify as female</li><li>• 54% identify as Hispanic</li><li>• 11% identify as African-American or African</li><li>• 5% identify as Asian</li><li>• 11% identify as something other than straight or heterosexual</li><li>• 6% identify as having a disability</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 83% first-generation college students</li><li>• 64% report lived experience of homelessness</li><li>• 41% report prior foster care involvement</li><li>• 70% identify as female</li><li>• 37% identify as African-American or African</li><li>• 30% identify as Hispanic</li><li>• 4% identify as Asian</li><li>• 21% identify as something other than straight or heterosexual</li><li>• 19 languages represented; 25% speak Spanish</li></ul>

# Education Expansion: Psychiatric Capacity

New Psychiatry Residency Programs established in two rural regions of California.



- In 2024, HCAI awarded the final installment in a \$1.8M grant from 2020 to establish a new psychiatry residence program. The **Healthy Rural California, Inc.**, Butte County Behavioral Health, program received final ACGME\* initial accreditation in 2022 and is now operating.
- UC San Diego will be awarded the final HCAI grant payment of their \$2.49M grant this year after receiving their final ACGME accreditation in 2025, having established the **Imperial County Behavioral Health Services** program. This program has *also* been awarded \$4M in BH-CONNECT\*\* funds to train their first four new psychiatry residents.

\*Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME)

\*\*Behavioral Health Community-Based Organized Networks of Equitable Care and Treatment (BH-CONNECT)

# Education Expansion: Success Story

*“The HCAI grant will not only enhance and enrich the training opportunities but also provide needed mental health services to youth who are marginalized, underserved, and lacking access to such services.”-Paramjit Joshi, MD, UCI*

- In 2024, UCI used Psychiatric Education Capacity Expansion (PECE) funding to expand the residency program, adding two new training slots.
- Medi-Cal Behavioral Health Residency Training Program (MBH-RTP) will fund residency and fellowship training program slots at University of California, Irvine (UCI).
  - HCAI awarded UCI \$1.8M for two adult psychiatry residency positions.
  - HCAI awarded UCI \$1M for two Child and Adolescent Psychiatry (CAP) fellowship positions. Fellows in the newly established “community track” in the CAP program, will increase the number of child and adolescent psychiatrists providing services to Medi-Cal youth.





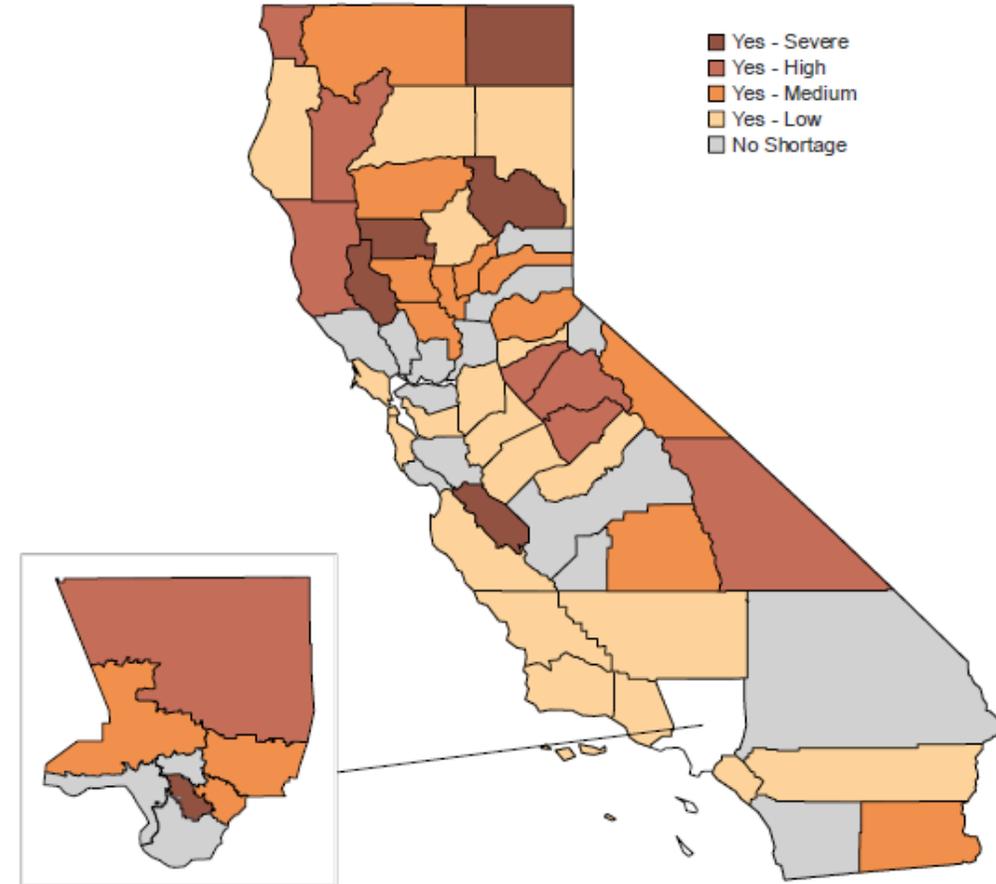
# Nursing

# Song-Brown Registered Nurse Awards

The Song-Brown Registered Nurse (RN) program aims to address California's RN shortages by expanding training in California's most impacted regions.

- Awarded \$2.7 million for the Song-Brown RN program:
  - Eight expansion programs, supporting 40 slots
  - One existing program, supporting 10 slots
- Prioritized to increase enrollment capacity and produce additional graduates to close statewide and regional workforce gaps
- Supply and demand modeling was used to guide award decisions to the most severe nursing shortage areas
- Funding was intentionally directed toward institutions located in higher-need regions

Registered Nurse Shortage Areas (RNSA)





# Primary Care

# Primary Care Programs

**Song-Brown Grant Program – Primary Care Residency** Objective: Provide funds for training programs committed to increasing the number of primary care physicians working in underserved communities in California.

- In December 2025, HCAI awarded a total of \$41,675,000 to 66 applicants supporting 144 existing slots, 11 expansion slots, and 51 THC slots.

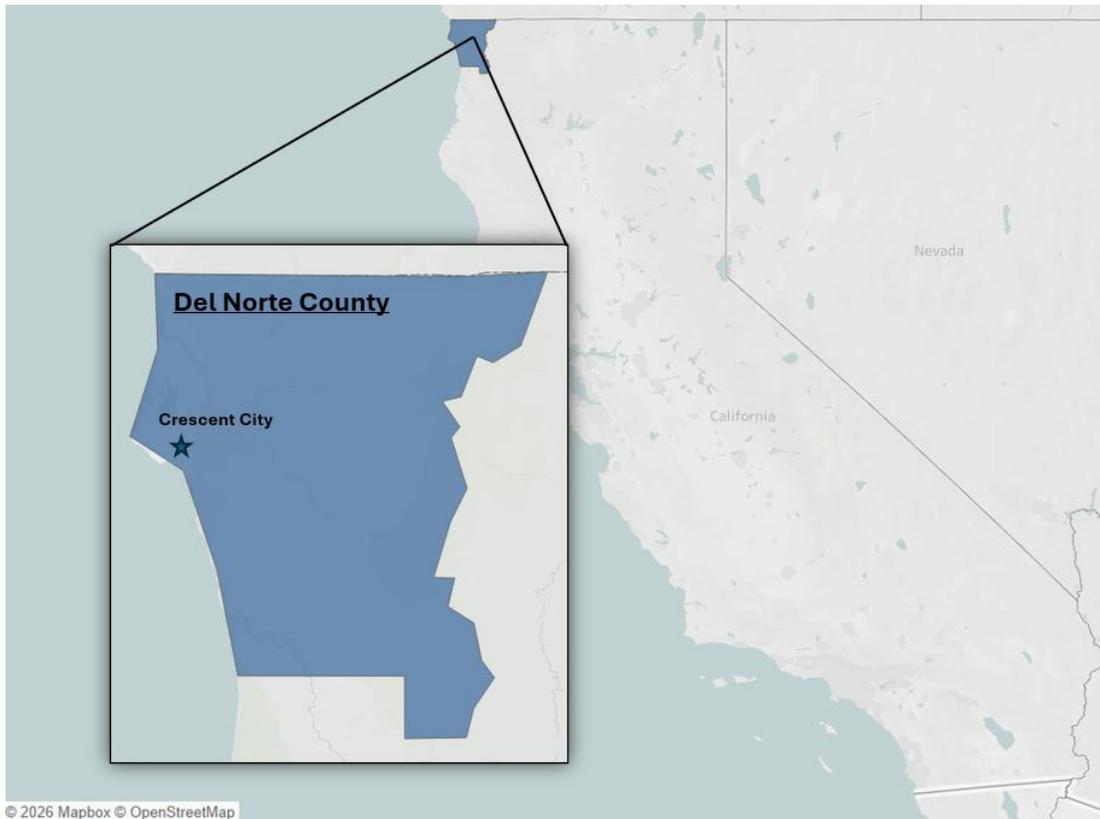
## **Song-Brown Grant Program – Family Nurse Practitioner/Physician Assistant**

Objective: Provide funds for training programs committed to increasing the number of primary care nurse practitioner and physician assistant trainees working in underserved communities in California.

- In December 2025, HCAI awarded a total of \$3,068,000 to 17 applicant supporting a total of 236 existing slots.

# Song-Brown: Del Norte County

Sutter Coast Hospital/Family Medicine Rural Track Residency Program, a primary care residency program in Del Norte County, received \$1M in New Programs funding in December 2025.



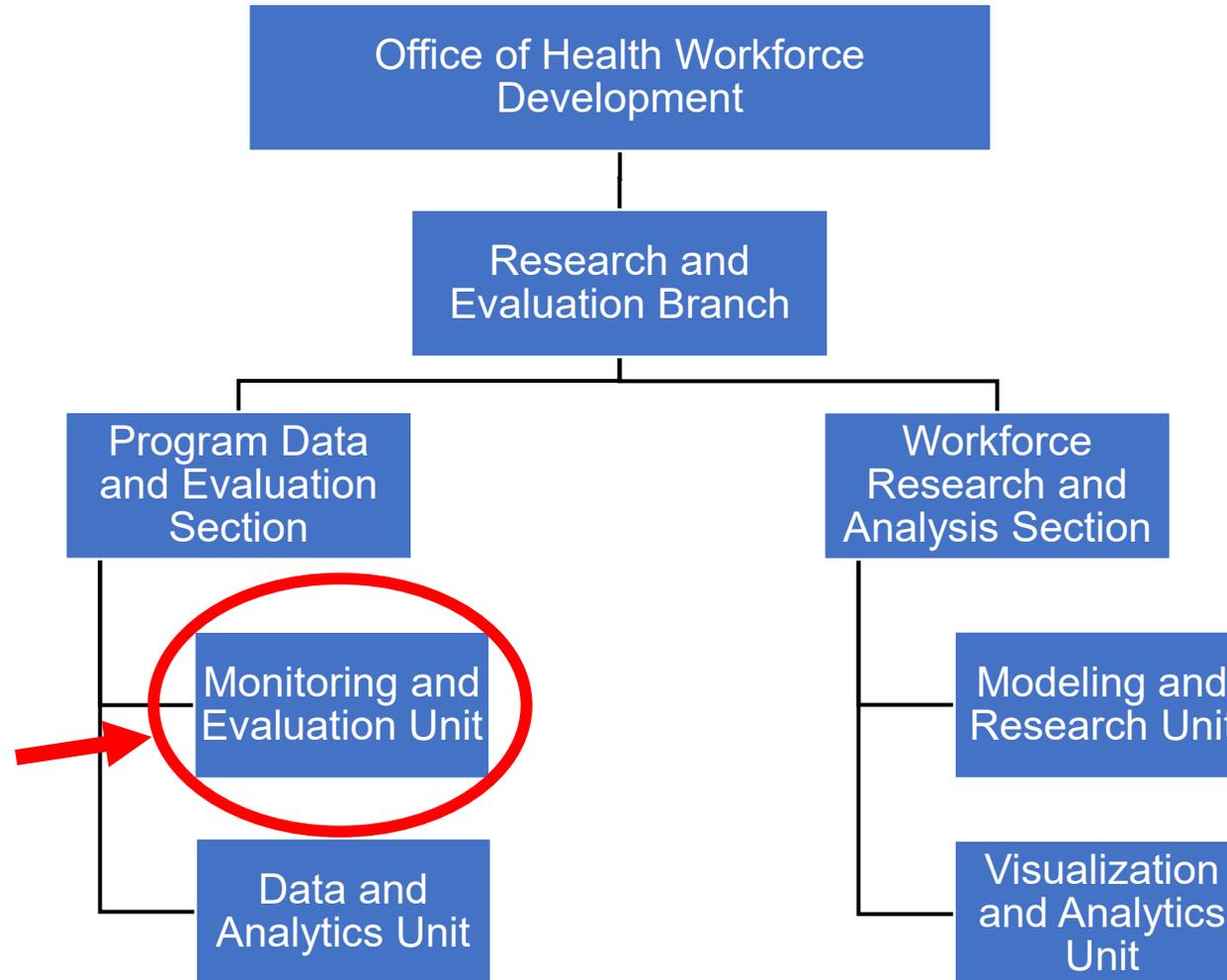
## Highlights:

- Located in Crescent City, CA, with a focus on comprehensive rural practice.
- Northernmost ACGME accredited residency program in California.
- First and only residency program in Del Norte County.
- Anticipates adding two residents per year starting in 2026 until reaching a total of six residents.

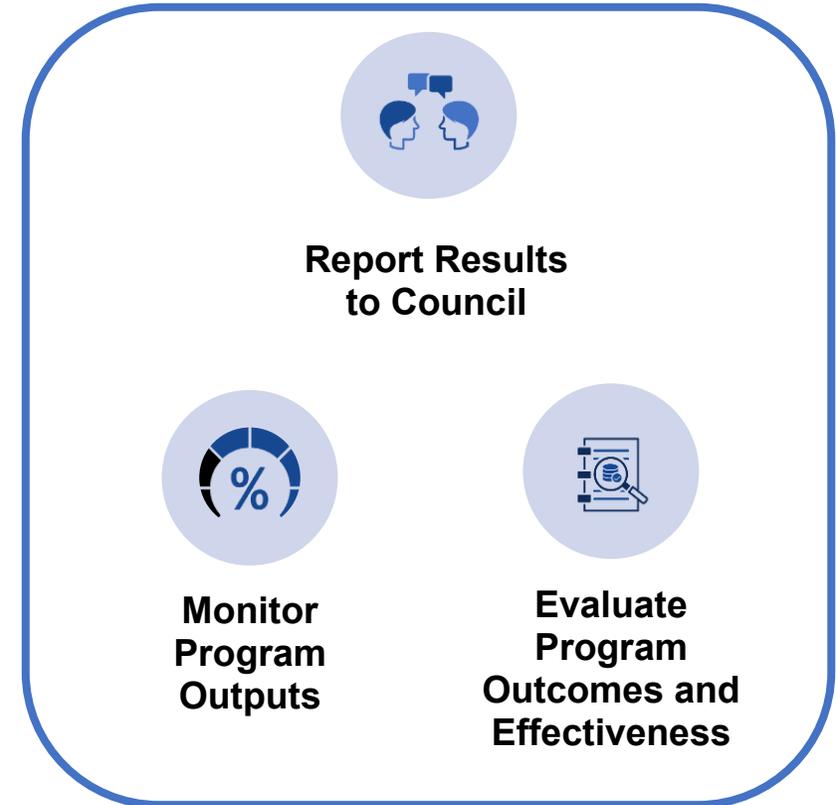
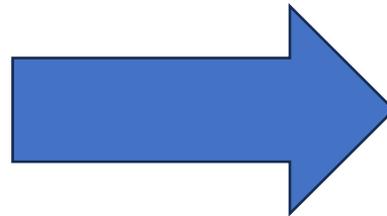


# Strengthening Program Monitoring & Evaluation

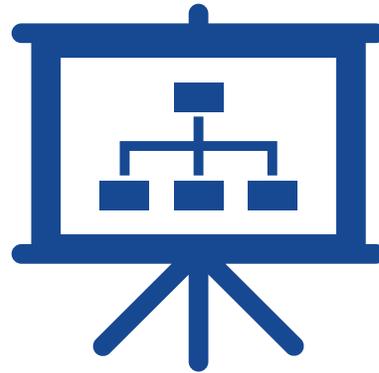
# OHWD Research and Evaluation Org Chart



# Monitoring & Evaluation Vision and Approach



# Next Steps



**Additional Monitoring & Evaluation  
Updates at July Council Meeting!**



# Behavioral Health Services Act Funding & WET Plan

# BHSA Overview

The Behavioral Health Services Act (BHSA) is the first major structural reform of the Mental Health Services Act (MHSA) since it was passed in 2004.

The BHSA:

- Expands treatment to include those with substance use disorders (SUD)
- Prioritizes care for those with the most serious mental illnesses
- Provides ongoing resources for housing and workforce
- Continues investments in prevention, early intervention, and innovative pilot programs

*Note: Because of the expansion to include SUD the law updates the name of the MHSA to the BHSA.*

# BHSA Workforce Funding

- The BHSA, which was passed by California voters in March 2024, includes two mechanisms to support building a pipeline of behavioral health professionals:
- **Statewide Investment:** Effective July 1, 2026, 10 percent of BHSA funding is directed to statewide investments, including 3 percent allocated to **HCAI** for workforce investments
- **County-Directed Investments:** In addition to the statewide investment, counties may use a portion of their Behavioral Health Services and Supports (BHSS) allocation on **Workforce Education and Training activities**<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> W&I Code Section 5892, subdivision (a)(3)

# WET Plan

- [Welfare and Institutions Code Sections 5820-5822](#) create the required guidelines and approval process for the Five-Year Workforce Education and Training (WET) Plan required by the Behavioral Health Services Act
- Purpose of Statute:
  - State law requires HCAI to develop a plan every five years that outlines the workforce needs and planning necessary to serve people with chronic behavioral health conditions within the public behavioral health system
  - Serves as a framework to support WET and build an inclusive and diverse workforce to meet community needs
- The Statute envisions collaboration between HCAI and California Behavioral Health Planning Council (CBHPC) to:
  - Advise HCAI on the Five-Year WET Plan development
  - Review and approve the Five-Year WET Plan

# The Intersection of BHSA and WET Plan

- The **Five-Year WET Plan**, established in state statute under the MHSA and continued within the **BHSA**, focuses on creating and sustaining a culturally competent, client-driven behavioral health workforce. The Five-Year WET Plan serves as a guide for developing Behavioral Health Workforce programs.
- This Community Engagement process will:
  - Support the development of the WET Plan
  - Assist HCAI in prioritizing BHSA funds through meaningful input from stakeholders
  - Help shape collaborative strategies that strengthen talent pipelines and better align education and training with the needs of California's communities

# Engagement opportunities

- **Date TBD:** March Behavioral Health Task Force Lunch & Learn
- **April 8, 2026:** Behavioral Health Task Force
- **April 15-16, 2026:** California Behavioral Health Planning Council (CBHPC) and Workforce and Employment Committee (WEC)
- **June 16-19, 2026:** California Behavioral Health Planning Council (CBHPC)

# 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
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$1,900,000,000</b>

	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029
Behavioral Health Student Loan Repayment Program	Jul Launch				
Behavioral Health Residency Program	Jul 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			