

# Cultivating Pathways to a Quality and Resilient Behavioral Health Workforce

Nickie Zenn, Ed.S., NCSP  
Licensed School Psychologist  
Academic Programs Director  
Associate Professor of Instruction  
Dept. of Mental Health Law and Policy  
[nzenn@usf.edu](mailto:nzenn@usf.edu)



UNIVERSITY of  
**SOUTH FLORIDA**

# The Behavioral Health Workforce

Psychiatrists and  
psychologists

Social workers

Counselors (e.g.,  
addiction, mental  
health, school)

Psychiatric nurses,  
aids, technicians,  
and rehabilitation  
specialists

Peer support  
specialists

Recovery coaches

Community health  
workers

Paraprofessionals

Professionals in the  
mental health and  
substance use  
recovery fields



# Florida Behavioral Healthcare Workforce Development Pathways

A three-pronged approach to attracting, retaining, and developing the behavioral healthcare workforce.

Attracting

- Attract Incoming Workforce

Retaining

- Retain Current Workforce

Developing

- Develop Workforce

# Attracting Incoming Workforce

## High Schools and Vocational Education

### Florida

- Palm Beach - BeWell PBC
- USF CBCS – Hosting High School Students for Behavioral Healthcare exploration in BHC & SW

### State and National Level

#### National recommendation –

- introduce students to social service industries during earlier school years and provide externship opportunities to high school graduates to instill a desire to work in behavioral healthcare.

### Nebraska

- links college and high school students interested in behavioral health careers with mentors in the field.

## Colleges and Universities

### Florida

- USF – Behavioral Healthcare B.S.

### State and National Level

#### National recommendations

- Many programs recruit diverse behavioral health providers but do not address the lack of a pipeline for underserved populations to enter the workforce
- The National Association of School Psychologists is encouraging –School Psychologists to work with undergraduate programs to create practicums with School districts.

### Washington and Oregon

- focused on graduate school curriculum updates to reflect the changes in the profession and provider diversity.

### Tennessee –

- tuition stipends for behavioral health-related fields with post-graduation service requirements.

# Attracting Incoming Workforce

## Certifications by experience or education

### Florida –

- Certified Behavioral Health Technician or Certified Addiction Counselor – HS – GED
- Certified Mental Health Professional – Bachelor's degree and 2,000 hours of work-related experience and 100 hours of direct supervision
- Certified Behavioral Health Case Manager – Bachelor's and training offers a provisional certification to gain work experience

### State and National Level –

#### National recommendation –

- Expanding the use of non-clinical behavioral health support providers and paraprofessionals, such as peers

### Texas

- research and explore behavioral health professionals' education, licensing, and scope of practice

### Vermont found the following effective recruitment tools

- licensure reciprocity,
- clinical internships with adequate supervision

## Advertising and Recruitment

### Florida –

- Consider Statewide advertising – removing barriers and stigma for those interested in a career in behavioral healthcare and attracting others to the field.
- Raise awareness to those starting a career and established professionals looking for a new career.

### State and National Level

#### National recommendation –

- Promote outreach and recruitment efforts early to encourage students to consider careers in the behavioral health field.

### Tennessee recommended

- Coordinated campaign to highlight the need for behavioral health professionals
- Showcase current professionals and why they chose careers in behavioral healthcare

# Attracting Incoming Workforce

## Incentives Rural Areas, Entry level, and Retention

State and National Level Incentives –

National recommendation –

- Scholarships are more effective for recruiting students from diverse backgrounds due to the upfront cost of attending college and the length of time it takes to pay back student loans

Local community and statewide incentives that will attract and recruit behavioral healthcare professionals:

- Property tax and housing incentives for rural and urban areas,
- Student loan forgiveness and Scholarships
- Wage stipends, moving assistance,
- Telehealth or remote work opportunities.

Oregon found that loan repayment was an attractive incentive to **recruit** providers but not to retain them.

North Carolina found an increased need for:

- Parity between job qualifications and compensation
- Greater access to clinical supervision.

Tennessee –

- Implement behavioral health sign-on bonus initiative to recruit and retain vital and underserved positions
- Paid clinical supervision hours
- Scholarship programs, flexible work schedules

# Retain The Current Workforce

## State and National Level –

- Create an early professional and mentor behavioral health organization to support and retain the current workforce.
- Create certifications and advancement opportunities
- Incentives – Stipends, Student Loan Forgiveness or Payment Assistance, Longevity Incentives, and Tuition Reimbursement and Tax incentives.
- Clinical Supervision and Intern Stipends/Grants - for licensed behavioral health providers to supervise associates and
- Stipends/grants for interns to complete the supervised clinical experience required to obtain a license to practice.
- Financial – Increase Low Reimbursement rates and compensation for behavioral health services

## New Mexico –

- Efforts included an integration of primary care and behavioral health.

## Oregon found –

- Opportunities for professional development and career progression as successful incentives for **retaining** the behavioral healthcare workforce.

## Washington State and California-

- found success with reimbursement and compensation commensurate to required education,

## New Mexico –

- Provides rural practice state tax credits for social workers and counselors

## North Carolina –

- found a need for an increased effort for positive workplace cultures and greater access to clinical supervision.

# Develop Workforce Leadership

## State and National Level -

- Create a Behavioral Healthcare Leadership Academy – to develop tomorrow’s leaders and provide mentorship ([FLDOE – The Florida Educational Leadership Standards](#))

## University -

- Certificates in Behavioral Healthcare Leadership and Management include input from today’s leaders.
- Master’s Degrees in Behavioral Healthcare Leadership include input from today’s leaders.
- Center for Behavioral Healthcare Workforce Development  
(Thank you, Florida Legislators SB 330)

## Nebraska –

The Behavioral Health Education Center provides:

- Interprofessional behavioral health training, curriculum development, and outcomes research;
- Behavioral health workforce analysis: Behavioral health education and training sites in 6 regions statewide

## Tennessee –

- To create cross-provider learning opportunities that support networking and collaboration.

## Illinois –

The Behavioral Health Workforce Center

1. Policy recommendations that address structural and policy barriers to recruitment, training, and retention.
2. Data collection on behavioral health workforce needs.
3. Diversity and equity initiatives to increase the number and diversity of behavioral health workers across the state.



# Questions



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# Thank You

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