

September 27, 2022

Elizabeth Landsberg
Director, California Department of Health Care Access and Information
2020 W El Camino Ave #800
Sacramento, CA 95833

Sent via email to: Elizabeth.Landsberg@hcai.ca.gov

Re: HCAI Loan Repayment and Scholarship Programs: Feedback from California Alliance

Dear Elizabeth Landsberg:

The California Alliance of Children and Family Services represents over 160 nonprofit organizations serving children, youth and families through behavioral health, education, foster care, prevention and juvenile justice programs throughout the state. Our member agencies employ behavioral health professionals in a wide variety of roles and are dedicated to recruiting and retaining high-quality staff to provide crucial behavioral health services to children and families. The Alliance greatly appreciates HCAI's focus on addressing California's behavioral health workforce challenges and we have been promoting your many wonderful programs. We would like to share the following feedback and suggestions from our providers as they navigate these programs:

State Loan Repayment Program

- There was overwhelming interest in this opportunity and applicants that missed the September deadline are eager to apply next year.
- Associate clinicians (Social Workers and Marriage and Family Therapists) are ineligible and could benefit from the program. Is there a possibility that we could expand eligibility?
- The documentation/Grant Guide does not clearly outline what is required for agencies to become approved sites.
 - Agencies are unclear whether they are eligible if their county is only partially considered a Mental Health Professional Shortage area—could guidance be issued around this?
 - From a provider: *“Our county is considered only partially a Mental Health Professional Shortage area- do you know how we can drill down into that to figure out if our employees qualify for this? I have access to the data sets, but do not have the software or the time/expertise to do a useful analysis.”*

Other HCAI Programs/ General Feedback and Recommendations

- There are limited opportunities for non-licensed staff.
 - Clinicians working towards a Doctorate in Psychology do not appear to be eligible for any programs until they become licensed. Could we consider expanding eligibility?
- Many supervisors are licensed but may not meet the hours requirements for direct patient care because of their supervisory duties. Could we include supervisors in loan repayment programs by expanding the hours requirement to direct patient care *or* the supervision of direct care staff?
- One member shared they are eager to use these HCAI programs as a retention strategy because many employees are looking to return to school or complete their credentialing and the hope is that these HCAI programs will support these professionals in staying in the field.



- The Eligibility Quiz on the HCAI website is a helpful tool for potential applicants in navigating the numerous different programs.

The Alliance commends HCAI for your commitment to a sustainable and diverse healthcare workforce in California, and we are thankful for your partnership on this important issue. We hope these recommendations and general feedback are helpful as we continue our partnership. Please let us know if there are opportunities to engage further, or if you have any questions about our feedback.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Paige Clark". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Paige Clark
Policy and Regulatory Analyst
California Alliance of Child and Family Services

CC: Caryn Rizell, HCAI
Hovik Khosrovian, HCAI
Anne Powell, HCAI