

Behavioral health workforce pilot program and training grants program (House Bill 1504)

Overview

The funding for Fiscal Year 2021 was provided for The Health Care Authority (HCA) to implement a behavioral health workforce pilot program and training support grants program for community behavioral health providers. This was intended to support but is not limited to clinical social workers, licensed mental health counselors, licensed marriage and family therapists, clinical psychologists, and substance abuse treatment providers.

Background

The bill directed HCA's Division of Behavioral Health and Recovery (DBHR) to implement these programs in partnership with and through the regional Accountable Communities of Health (ACH) or the University of Washington Behavioral Health Institute. HCA engaged the Director of the Behavioral Health Institute and the Chief Executives of the ACHs to determine interest and capacity to implement the programs. Both expressed interest, and both indicated that ACHs were uniquely positioned to maximize the potential benefits. Considering this information, HCA implemented a Letter of Interest process to identify interested ACHs. The ACH Executives worked collaboratively with HCA to select four entities to submit letters of interest. All four letters of interest were approved.

Selection criteria

During selection it was determined that eligible sites should include licensed community-based behavioral health agencies, state hospitals, or other facilities operated by the Department of Social and Health Services. Sites must have agreed to work with the ACH on technical assistance needs. Sites must have agreed to tracking and reporting

requirements. Sites must have agreed to work with ACH to develop a final report with consideration for replication, improvements, and sustainable solutions.

Workforce pilot programs

The intent of the pilot programs is to provide incentive pay for individuals serving as clinical supervisors within community behavioral health agencies, state hospitals, and other facilities operated by the Department of Social and Health Services. The desired outcomes of the pilot programs is to increase internships and entry level opportunities for new clinicians through recruitment and retention activities. Three ACHs were approved to contract with the HCA to implement the pilot program.

- Greater Health Now (formally Greater Columbia ACH) agreed to implement the pilot program with at least one agency that provides substance use disorder services.
- North Central ACH agreed to implement the pilot program with least one agency that provides services to medicaid enrolled children.
- While the other two ACHs are in Eastern Washington, Southwest ACH is implementing the pilot program in Western Washington.

Training support grant program

The Training Support Grants Program must establish a flexible grant program for behavioral health agencies serving children. This funding can be used for trainings with a focus on Evidenced Based Programs (EBPs), continuing education, and quality monitoring infrastructure. North Sound ACH is currently contracted with the HCA to implement the training grants program.

Outcomes

The ACHs running the pilot programs, and the agencies receiving these funds have used them to meet the needs of their area. Some agencies have used the funds to start and build relationships with schools to help with recruitment of interns. Some agencies are using the funds to pay interns during

their internships. Others are using the funds as an incentive to get interns to stay on as employees after their internship has been completed.

North Sound ACH is providing free trainings designed to help clinicians working with Medicaid enrolled children and youth around Washington state.

A final report from the ACHs is due to HCA August 15, 2023. HCA must provide a detailed report on the outcomes to the Office of Financial Management and the appropriate committees of the Legislature by September 30, 2023 on the outcomes of the pilot program.

Funding

Workforce pilot program

State fiscal year (SFY) 2022: GFS \$440,000

SFY 2023: \$440,000

Training support grant program

SFY 2022: GFS \$60,000

SFY 2023: GFS \$60,000

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