

NEWS RELEASE



DHCS INVESTS IN OPIOID PREVENTION, TREATMENT, AND RECOVERY CAREERS AND PROVIDES SERVICES TO DUI PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS WITH SUBSTANCE USE DISORDERS

SACRAMENTO — California continues to invest in programs to address the opioid epidemic. Today, the Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) made \$18 million in grants available to help students ages 18 and older gain practical on-the-job experience in behavioral health careers. DHCS also awarded more than \$4 million to 54 driving under the influence (DUI) programs to support the creation of linkages to resources and referral options to treatment to reduce opioid overdoses and opioid-related traffic fatalities and to curb recidivism amongst DUI program participants with an opioid use disorder (OUD) or substance use disorder (SUD).

“Addressing the opioid epidemic continues to be one of the Administration’s highest priorities. At the Department of Health Care Services, we are committed to working with our many partners statewide to monitor and address opioid and fentanyl overdose trends, and closely collaborating with stakeholders to support local prevention and intervention efforts,” said DHCS Director Michelle Baass. “Today’s awards will help us recruit the next generation of behavioral health professionals to combat the opioid crisis and provide resources and treatment to those in need.”

Since coming into office, Governor Gavin Newsom has dedicated more than \$1 billion in funding to fight the opioid crisis by removing opioids from the streets, providing resources to California communities in need, and increasing education and awareness to prevent harm in the first place.

Today’s grant announcements are just two of several efforts made by DHCS in recent months to tackle SUD, including [\\$52 million invested in opioid prevention and treatment services](#), [\\$12 million to tackle youth opioid use](#), [\\$3.4 million to transform medical practices to address the opioid crisis](#), and [\\$58.5 million for youth substance use prevention](#).

Mentored Internship Program

The Mentored Internship Program, a Behavioral Health Workforce Development (BHWD) initiative, allows nonprofit provider organizations, Tribal organizations, and county-operated providers of behavioral health services in underserved and diverse communities to apply for grants to support internship programs. Organizations can apply for up to \$500,000 to develop, implement, and maintain an in-house Mentored Internship Program that will create a sustainable SUD workforce. Priority for funding will be given to organizations that propose to specifically train more professionals who work with individuals who have, or are at risk of developing, OUDs.

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The internship program intends to:

- 1) Train behavioral health providers and professionals specifically serving individuals with, or at risk of developing, OUDs.
- 2) Enhance the ability of behavioral health providers to effectively prevent, treat, and help individuals recover from opioid use.
- 3) Better reflect the patients in need of services by providing career opportunities for behavioral health professionals with lived experience.
- 4) Help behavioral health agencies implement internships in conjunction with their local educational institutions beyond 2024 when grant funding ends.
- 5) Enable behavioral health agencies to make job offers to interns who have completed the program.

Funded by Opioid Settlement Funds, the Mentored Internship Program project was established in 2022 in response to a variety of California-specific behavioral health workforce needs assessments and recommendations that showed a shortage of professionals across the spectrum of behavioral health careers. This program is part of DHCS' broader efforts to expand California's behavioral health workforce through the BHWD initiative, which seeks to improve access to, and productive participation in, behavioral health services across the state. The Round 2 application deadline is March 15, 2023, and this round of funding will further assist with mitigating the opioid crisis by providing comprehensive training to future behavioral health professionals.

To learn more about the BHWD projects and to apply for the second round of the Mentored Internship Program funding, visit www.workforce.buildingcalhhs.com.

DUI Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT) Integration/Outreach Pilot Project

The [DUI MAT](#) pilot is funded by State Opioid Response (SOR) III federal dollars. Funds will be expended between February 1, 2023, and June 30, 2024. Awardees are DHCS-licensed DUI programs in good standing and qualified to do business in California. DHCS will also develop an early recognition and intervention pilot for DUI program participants with OUD or SUD.

While law enforcement continues to make advances toward detecting drug influence through field sobriety testing, the majority of DUI arrests/convictions continue to be based solely on the influence of alcohol. With approximately 118,000 DUI participants enrolling in DUI programs annually, this pilot will provide outreach and intervention services for participants with underlying OUD and/or SUD. The pilot is part of DHCS' broader efforts to address SUD, collectively known as the California MAT Expansion Project, to increase access to MAT, reduce unmet treatment need, and reduce opioid overdose-related deaths through the provision of prevention, treatment, and recovery activities. For more information, visit <https://californiamat.org/>.

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CONTACT: [DHCS Office of Communications](#), (916) 440-7660

www.dhcs.ca.gov