

# Strengthen the Primary Care and Behavioral Health Workforce



FQHCs (federally-qualified health centers or health centers) are non-profit, community-driven healthcare providers serving low-income and medically underserved communities. Health centers offer comprehensive primary and preventive care, including medical, pharmacy, dental, mental health, and social support services.

Better primary and preventive care access is associated with improved outcomes and lower costs. Health centers depend on a network of over 14,000 clinicians and supporting staff to deliver affordable and accessible healthcare. Health centers must recruit, train, and retain an integrated multidisciplinary workforce to provide high-quality care.

<b>Physicians</b>	325 Family Physicians and GPs 264 Pediatricians 79 Internists 115 Ob/Gyns
<b>Medical Care</b>	642 Nurse Practitioners 132 Physician Assistants 912 Nurses 408 Pharmacy Personnel 218 Laboratory Personnel
<b>Dental</b>	196 Dentists 107 Dental Hygienists
<b>Behavioral Health</b>	54 Psychiatrists 16 Licensed Clinical Psychologists 122 LCSWs 287 LPCs and other providers
<b>Enabling Services</b>	468 Case Managers 420 Eligibility Assistance Workers 146 Outreach Workers 121 Patient/ Community Edu. Specialists 104 Community Health Workers



## 1. INCREASE FUNDING FOR PROVIDER LOAN REPAYMENT PROGRAMS

### ✓ Boost Funding for the Physician Education Loan Repayment Program.

State-funded provider loan repayment programs pay off a portion of student loans in exchange for providing care in health professional shortage areas. The legislature should add funding to incentivize providers to practice in primary care and medically underserved areas.

### ✓ Increase the Loan Repayment Program for Mental Health Professionals appropriation to \$14 million.

Currently funded at just \$2 million for the biennium, the Loan Repayment Program for Mental Health Professionals should match funding levels of the Physician Education Loan Repayment Program.

This program supports a wide variety of behavioral health providers including: psychologists, licensed clinical social workers, licensed professional counselors, and licensed marriage and family therapists who work in underserved areas across the state.



## 2. INCREASE MENTAL HEALTH PROVIDERS

### ✓ Increase practice opportunities for behavioral health (BH) trainees.

Allow master's level behavioral health interns to be reimbursed by Medicaid. This funding can help create and sustain behavioral health training partnerships at health centers. Additionally, the state should award funding to make the training of BH interns more affordable through the use of new grants for internships, clinical supervision, and licensing fees.



## 3. PROMOTE PRIMARY CARE FOR FUTURE MEDICAL PROFESSIONALS

### ✓ Promote primary care training and education in medically underserved areas.

Increase funding for graduate medical education in primary care and incentivize academic institutions and hospitals to partner with health centers to train the primary care workforce.

### ✓ Increase funding for the Family Practice Residency Program.

Provide additional funding to support more rural and public health rotations.