

Certified Wellness Coach Profession

**Sharmil Shah, Assistant Deputy Director
Anne Powell, Health Program Specialist II**

**Office of Health Workforce Development
Department of Health Care Access and Information (HCAI)**



The HCAi Vision

Every Californian should have access to equitable, affordable, quality health care provided in a safe environment by a diverse workforce — guided by health information that improves outcomes for all.

As California's health care needs expand, HCAI is now responsible for managing an array of programs that grew substantially in recent budgets, including new areas of workforce development.

Health Workforce Development

- **Support and increase a health workforce that:**
 - Serves medically underserved areas.
 - Represents the California it serves through racial and language diversity.
 - Serves Medi-Cal members.
- **Offer programs that provide financial support for:**
 - Organizations expanding educational capacity.
 - Individuals to pursue health careers (scholarship and loan repayment).
 - Organizations to build the workforce pipeline.





The Need for Certified Wellness Coaches

The 2021-2022 California Budget included a \$4.4 billion investment and **five-year plan to transform the behavioral health (BH) system for children and youth.**

As part of that funding and plan, **HCAI received \$338M to design and build the Certified Wellness Coach (CWC) workforce.**



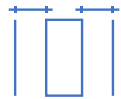
The CWC role is designed to...



increase overall capacity.



build a **public behavioral health workforce** that better represents the diversity of **California's children & youth**.



fill some of the **workforce gaps** that exist today.



ensure the role is both a **desirable occupation** and a **stepping-stone to more advanced BH professions**.



engage directly with children and youth through **age 25**.



serve **vulnerable populations** where they live, study, and work.

How the profession was developed...



Research

Extensive research literature review



Interview

Conducted 50+ interviews with industry leaders



Design

Developed initial Certified Wellness Coach design options



Test

Tested design options with stakeholder groups



Refine

Refined role design



Implement

Implement in the workforce (current)

Behavioral Health Career Lattice

Minimum Education Level Required	Illustrative Behavioral Health Lattice with Example Behavioral Health Roles				
Supervised Professional	Certificate	Other non-BH roles	Community health worker	Peer support	SUD counselor
	Associates	Certified Wellness Coach I			
	Bachelors	Certified Wellness Coach II	Social worker		
	Masters	School counselor, social worker, or other behavioral health clinicians working towards licensure (including PPS Certifies school staff)			
Independent Practitioner	Licensure	Licensed clinicians, other behavioral health clinicians such as LCSWs, LMFTs, LPCCs, (including PPS)			
	PhD	Psychologist (including PPS educational psychologist)			
	MD	Psychiatrist, primary care providers			

Select Observations

- The Certified Wellness Coach role is designed to be an additional opportunity in the lattice, **bridging the gap between roles** with minimum to no education to Master's-level graduates.
- The Certified Wellness Coach role **offers employment and education to those that want to advance their careers** to higher levels of the career lattice.

Certification Requirements – Workforce Pathway

Prerequisites to Enter Program

Degree Required

Majors Accepted

Field Experience Needed

Wellness Coach I

- Professionals who are currently part of the behavioral health workforce

- Associate's degree

- Social Work
- Health & Human Services
- Addiction Studies
- Child Development/Early Intervention
- Psychology
- Sociology

- 1,000 hours
- Must be in mental health, social work, child welfare, or addiction/substance use services

Wellness Coach II

- Bachelor's degree

- Social Work
- Health & Human Services
- Addiction Studies
- Child Development/Early Intervention
- Psychology
- Sociology

- 2,000 hours¹
- Must be in mental health, social work, child welfare, or addiction/substance use

1. Hours from Wellness Coach I certification apply towards total.

Certification Requirements – Education Pathway

	Wellness Coach I	Wellness Coach II
Prerequisites to Enter Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• High school diploma or equivalent	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Wellness Coach I certification or Associate's in related field¹
Degree Required	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Associate's degree	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Bachelor's degree
Majors Accepted	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Social Work• Health & Human Services• Addiction Studies	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Social Work• Health & Human Services• Addiction Studies
Field Experience Needed	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 400 hours total	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 800 hours total²

1. Applicants can enter directly into bachelor's degree without listed prerequisites but will be required to complete Wellness Coach I education requirements throughout course of study. 2. Hours from Wellness Coach I certification apply towards total.

Services and Competencies of the Certified Wellness Coach

Services

Activities core to the Certified Wellness Coach roles

- 1 Wellness promotion and education
- 2 Screening
- 3 Care coordination and extension
- 4 Individual support
- 5 Group support
- 6 Crisis referral

Additional Competencies

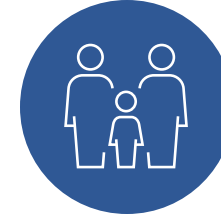
Demonstrated areas of knowledge to be evaluated against during field experience

- 7 Cultural responsiveness, humility, and mitigating implicit bias
- 8 Professionalism, ethics, and legal mandates
- 9 Communication
- 10 Operating in role and different environments

Potential Applicant Pipeline to Enter Into Educational Programs



People who are currently working in healthcare or behavioral health
(e.g., community health workers and peer personnel)



People in unrelated entry-level roles that have a desire to work in behavioral health and/or with children and youth



People currently working in schools, such as paraprofessionals or administrative staff



Recent high school graduates with an interest in behavioral health



Individuals in colleges, either pursuing a degree or working on campus

Example Sites for Certified Wellness Coach Services

Applies across ages

Example site	Early childhood ¹	Elementary school ²	Middle and high school ³	Transition aged ⁴
Schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Preschool programs Head start 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Primary school campus 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> High school campus 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community colleges Four year colleges
Community-Based Organizations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community centers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> YMCA Boys and Girls Club Community centers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community centers After-school programs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community centers Mobile crisis
Health Centers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Primary care Tribal health programs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Primary care clinics Tribal health programs Hospital specialty clinics Residential treatment centers Partial hospitalization programs Crisis service providers Federally qualified health centers Rural health clinics School health centers 		
Government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Childcare and development programs AIMSS⁵ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Juvenile justice Homeless service providers Foster care service providers Home-based & home-visiting programs 		
Telehealth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Technology/telecommunication solutions to support specific groups (e.g., rural areas, foster care system) After-hours services and easy-to-reach services for all groups Other Platforms 			

1. Ages 0-5. 2. Elementary schools with children aged 6-12. 3. Public middle and high schools with youth aged 13-18.
4. Ages 18-25. 5. American Indian Maternal Support Services.

Example Criteria for Sites

- **Sites that have direct youth engagement** (e.g., elementary schools, middle schools, and high schools).
- Sites that **promote sustainable impact**, including those that:
 - **Youth frequently occupy**, would want to try behavioral health services, and/or **trust the current services and individuals**
 - **Value coach services** and offer continued mentorship and professional development
 - **Employ staff knowledgeable about behavioral health services** and motivated to integrate coaches
- Consider sites that **promote feasibility**, including those that:
 - Serve youth with **needs that are appropriate for coaches' level of education and training**
 - **Offer infrastructure that supports scalability** (e.g., telehealth)

Multi-Year Timeline



Marketing

Summer 2023

Launch initial marketing campaign to drive awareness and recruit applicants

*Website expected to launch in Dec, 2023



Certification

Early 2024

Certification launched for qualified applicants

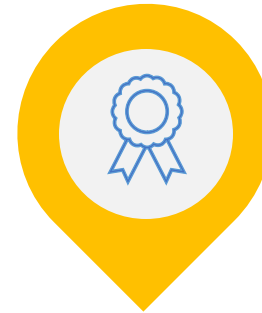


Grants

Early 2024

Employer support grant launched

*Expected to launch in Jan. 2024 and awarded May 2024



Scholarships

Mid 2024

Student scholarship cycle 1 launched

*Expected to launch in April 2024 with awards in Fall 2024



Education

Mid 2024

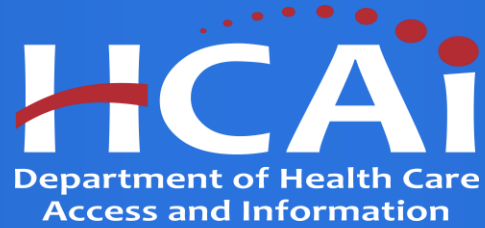
New Wellness Coach students enter education programs



Sustainability

Late 2024

Explore funding strategies to support this new profession



Thank you!

For further questions, please contact: WellnessCoach@hcai.ca.gov

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