

NH Behavioral Health Workforce Initiative

Kickoff Event Summary

Thank you to those who participated in the NH Behavioral Health Workforce Initiative kickoff event and shared their insights and perspectives. The conversation reflected a strong shared commitment to strengthening New Hampshire's behavioral health workforce and supporting the professionals, students, higher education institutions, and organizations that sustain it.

This summary highlights several themes, priorities, and opportunities that emerged during the event. The feedback shared will help guide the next phase of work for this initiative, including efforts to expand training opportunities, strengthen supervision and preceptor support, and build partnerships that support workforce development across the state.

Career Pathways and Workforce Entry

One theme that came up frequently was the need to make behavioral health careers more visible and accessible.

Many individuals interested in helping professions are not always aware of the range of behavioral health roles available or how to enter the field.

Key ideas included:

- Creating clearer and more visible career pathways into behavioral health
- Providing earlier exposure through internships, shadowing, and experiential learning opportunities
- Improving awareness of different professional roles and scopes of practice
- Supporting advancement opportunities for individuals already working in related roles

Increasing awareness earlier, particularly among students and individuals considering career transitions, was frequently noted as an important strategy for expanding the future workforce.

Training Capacity, Supervision, and Placement Opportunities

Training capacity also emerged as a major theme. While many organizations expressed interest in supporting trainees, a range of factors can influence whether organizations are able to host trainees and how many trainees they are able to host.

Challenges discussed included:

- Limited availability of licensed supervisors and preceptors
- The time, cost, and administrative demands associated with hosting trainees
- Coordination challenges between education programs and placement sites
- The need for additional support and training for supervisors, particularly those new to the role

Strengthening supervision infrastructure was frequently identified as an important opportunity to expand training capacity across the state. There was support for the plan to create a learning collaborative for supervisors and participants shared helpful feedback on potential topics and format. Additional needs and suggestions included sharing resources across organizations, exploring ways to reduce administrative burden and costs associated with providing supervision and training placements, and identifying additional ways to incentivize supervision.

Strengthening Partnerships Across Systems

The conversation also highlighted the importance of continued collaboration among education programs, community providers, state partners, and other stakeholders. While strong relationships already exist across New Hampshire, there may be opportunities to further build on these partnerships.

Ideas discussed included:

- Sharing information about training opportunities and placement needs
- Creating mechanisms to connect programs with potential training sites
- Learning from workforce development strategies used in other states

New Hampshire's size and strong professional networks were noted as advantages that could support effective statewide solutions.

Looking Ahead

We look forward to continuing the conversation as the NH Behavioral Health Workforce Initiative moves forward.

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