

WICHE



Western Interstate Commission  
For Higher Education

# Behavioral Health Workforce Strategies that Work

**National Academies of Science, Engineering, and Medicine**

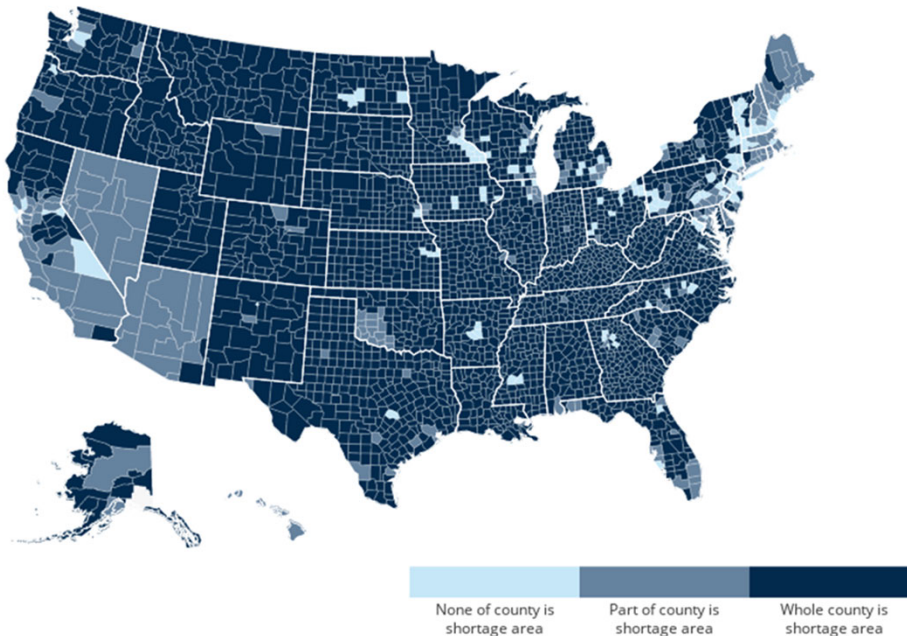
**Behavioral Health in Rural Communities**

April 20, 2023

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OREGON • SOUTH DAKOTA • UTAH • WASHINGTON • WYOMING • U.S. PACIFIC TERRITORIES & FREELY ASSOCIATED STATES

# Workforce Shortages are the challenge

Health Professional Shortage Areas: Mental Health, by County, 2022



- Dark Blue = HPSA-MH
- Most of U.S. has long standing shortages
- Over 1,000 Counties have no MH or SUD Professional

## For Consideration

- Where we need workers rarely coincides with where we educate and train learners
- Typical recruitment strategies for professionals focus at the end of the pipeline, or post-graduation, and seek to entice relocation.
- Too often higher education views rural/remote learners as “place bound” and not as “place committed”
- We need to seek ways to engage place committed learners, extend education and training opportunities to them, and develop local workforce where we need them
- Neary two-thirds (58.2%) of the U.S. workforce has some college, but no degree or certificate...do you know your workforce percent?
  - Now some examples...

# Creating Education Partnerships

Northern Marianas College + University of Alaska-Fairbanks

- Partnership between a community college and a university to offer a 2 + 2 Bachelor of Social Work Degree
- First 2 years delivered via in-person learning at NMC, upper-division to BSW delivered via technology enabled learning from UAF
- Enables place-committed students to remain in their home communities to earn BSW, in a curriculum specifically focused on rural/remote and indigenous social work.

# Building Capacity with a Place Committed Workforce

**Alaska Behavioral Health Aide Program – Behavioral Health Aide certification is a multi-level provider model which includes BHA Trainee (non-certified), BHA levels I, II, and III, and BH Practitioner (BHP). To become a certified BHA or BHP, individuals must:**

- Complete Community Health Aide Program Certification Board-specified training, practicum and work experience
- Meet the requirements of the **Knowledge and Skills Checklist** to demonstrate sufficient training and experience to provide service within a specified scope of practice
- Provide a broad range of services under the supervision of a Masters level clinician
- Maintain their certification by completing continuing education credits

» <https://www.anthc.org/behavioral-health-aide-program/>

## Growing our Own – Another example...

Minnesota has developed a Mental Health Behavioral Aide (MHBA), which is a paraprofessional in their Children's Therapeutic Services and Supports (CTSS) Agency.

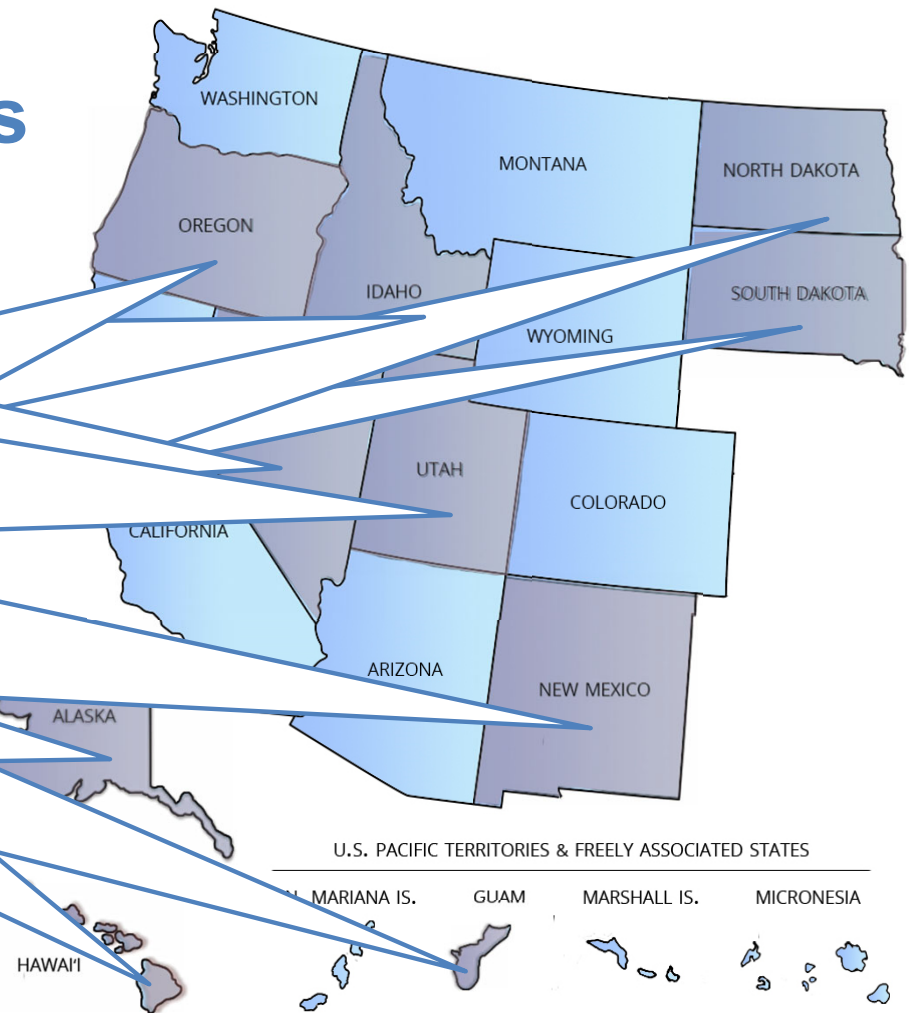
MHBA, Level I and II, must complete 30 hours of pre-service training. This must include:

- 15 hours of face-to-face training in mental health services delivery
- 8 hours of parent teaming training
- The remaining 7 hours may include one-to-one time with a mental health professional or practitioner.

(<https://www.revisor.mn.gov/rules/9535.4068/>)

# WICHE Affiliated Internships

Oregon State Hospital Psychology Internship Program (OSH-PIP)  
**246 Psychologists** have graduated from these programs, and we look forward to many more in the future . . .



## Other Areas of Crisis-centered Training

- Three Key concepts:
  - Identifying rural & frontier needs in your communities. Acknowledging that with each additional variable may come a need for specialization.
  - Building workforce to meet the needs = Thinking creatively about workforce availability (e.g., paraprofessionals, peer-to-peer, focus on mentoring youth who show promise, technology).
  - Prioritization at the State and Local level: Funding, resources, outreach, developing champions.



Thank you...

For Additional Information

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[www.wiche.edu/mentalhealth](http://www.wiche.edu/mentalhealth)