



2026 IMPACT REPORT

Building the Workforce California Needs



HealthForce Partners
CALIFORNIA

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Our Mission

HealthForce Partners California creates sustainable solutions that drive economic mobility, expand career pathways, and strengthen the healthcare sector. Through innovative partnerships and workforce solutions, we catalyze the growth of a skilled and diverse healthcare workforce.



HealthForce Partners

CALIFORNIA

LETTER FROM OUR CEO

A strong healthcare system and a strong economy are not separate goals. They are actually the same goal.

When a community has access to healthcare providers and career opportunities, families build financial stability. When hospitals and clinics can hire locally, dollars stay in the region. When medical schools choose to put down roots in underserved areas, they bring training, jobs, and long-term economic investment with them. Healthcare workforce development is economic development, and this past year, HealthForce Partners California amplified that truth more deliberately than ever.

In our first full year as an independent 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, we expanded into new regions across California, from Contra Costa and Tri-Valley to Solano County, forging new partnerships with health systems and universities. We published national research, and scaled programs that are opening real career pathways for people who have never had a clear route into this field. The infrastructure we built this year; the governance, the team, the systems, allow that impact to grow and travel.

When we work together to align these efforts intentionally, across programs, regions, and partners, we can meaningfully reduce healthcare workforce shortages, expand access to care, strengthen public health outcomes, and build economic vitality for communities across California.

What started in 2018 as a regional effort in the Northern San Joaquin Valley is now a multi-regional collaboration across counties in Northern and Central California. We are charging full speed ahead...and just getting started.



With gratitude,

Paul Lanning

CEO, HealthForce Partners California

2025-26 Impact at a Glance

18 Employer Partners	\$735,335 In Scholarships & Financial Awards	4 Service Regions in California
14 Education Partners	24%–2.75% Reduction of San Joaquin County's Behavioral Health Clinician Vacancy Rate	\$1,358,406 In New Funding Support

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Behavioral Health Workforce Partnership

We addressed critical shortages of behavioral health professionals, while creating career opportunities for local residents and delivered results that redefined what's possible in the region. When we began this work, San Joaquin County's behavioral health clinician vacancy rate stood at 24%. Today, that number is less than 3%. That didn't happen by accident. It happened because employers, educators, and community partners committed to a different approach.

'25 - '26 HIGHLIGHTS:

- > Clinician vacancy rate reduced from **24% to less than 3%** in San Joaquin County
- > **82** graduate student behavioral health practicum placements supervised across San Joaquin, Stanislaus and Merced Counties
- > **39,933** hours of service provided by students
- > **\$200,000** in scholarships awarded to local students
- > **21** Agencies in the Program
- > Specialty tracks supported include Social Work, Clinical Counseling, Marriage & Family Therapy, Peer Support Specialists, Substance Use Disorder Counselors, Psychiatric Technicians

Since its launch, this initiative has led to a 65% reduction in Psychiatric Technician and Mental Health Clinician vacancies across San Joaquin County, improving the timeliness, quality, and continuity of care in the region.

– Fay Vieira, Director Behavioral Health Services, San Joaquin County

Helping Our People Elevate (HOPE) Program for Nursing

HOPE is a multifaceted approach to addressing the nursing shortage through education and employer collaboration. The program continues to expand, recently receiving Board of Registered Nursing approval for expansion from 30 to 40 seats per cohort at San Joaquin Delta College. This powerful model is often showcased at regional and statewide conferences as a replicable framework for upskilling the workforce, providing upward mobility for healthcare workers while mitigating recruitment and retention challenges for employers and diversifying the local nursing workforce to reflect the communities it serves.

'25 - '26 HIGHLIGHTS:

- > **27** new graduates in the 2026 cohort bring the total to 145 healthcare professionals who have graduated with Associate's Degrees in Nursing
- > **100%** NCLEX-RN pass rate for the 2025 graduates
- > **96%** of graduates from the 2024 cohort were still employed as RNs in the county one year later
- > Stanislaus County pilot launched with 20 Sutter Health employees from Stanislaus and San Joaquin counties participating at Modesto Junior College

In partnership with HealthForce Partners, we help strengthen the local healthcare workforce pipeline, support nursing education and professional development, and invest in programs that prepare future healthcare leaders. Together, these efforts improve access to care, enhance the quality of healthcare services available to our community, and contribute to the overall health and well-being of the region. Together, we can shape brighter futures for families in our communities by creating opportunities for growth and success.

– Sandra Drumonde, Chief Nurse Executive, Sutter Health, Memorial Medical Center

Healthcare Professions Pathways Program (HPPP)

We are supporting underrepresented students in pursuing healthcare careers through a partnership with the California Department of Health Care Access and Information (HCAI), keeping authentic, human outcomes at the center. As one of our most locally impactful efforts, this program connects students from disadvantaged backgrounds to academic enrichment, career development, and hands-on internship experience. HPPP student stories are among the most powerful we have to share.

'25 - '26 HIGHLIGHTS:

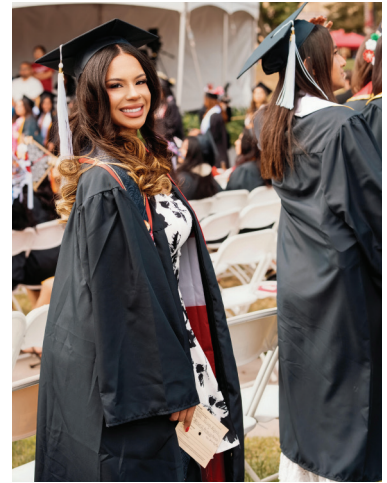
- > **1,036** students engaged in health career exploration
- > **473** students connected with either a peer mentor or faculty mentor
- > **288** students received personalized healthcare career advisory support
- > **266** received help from an academic advisor
- > **151** students certified in Basic Life Support CPR through the American Heart Association

Program expansion: In the coming year we will expand our Career Navigator model with new programs in K-12 and community college settings.

Student Story: Genesis Feliciano was juggling classes at California State University Stanislaus, work, and HPPP. Despite the daily struggle to keep up with it all, Genesis found the drive to enroll in the CNA Program at First Lady Permanente. She worked incredibly hard and has since graduated, earning a BS in Child Development, and a minor in Public Health. She is now officially a Certified Nursing Assistant!

CAREER EXPLORATION

As HealthForce Partners California has grown, so has our commitment to building healthcare career awareness and access from the earliest stages all while meeting students in their schools and communities.



NextGen MedPros

The NextGen MedPros program completed its run in June, having successfully expanded healthcare career awareness among 30 local high school students from eight schools.

The program, designed to expand healthcare career awareness and access for students in Modesto City Schools, demonstrated the value of creating healthcare career exploration opportunities around students' needs, interests, and lived experiences. This fostered a strong sense of community, bringing together students from multiple schools, encouraging relationship-building, peer support, and lasting friendships.

- > **30** high school participants engaged in the program
- > **53** hours spent in NextGen MedPros program, including tours
- > **4** Hospital Rotation Groups



My favorite experience as part of this internship was when I shadowed nurses and techs in the hospitals. Many of them were so awesome and sweet and really took the time to show me how things worked and why they did certain things the way that they did. They gave me great tips on how to move forward in the future and how to handle the hardships that come with the job. I was able to get real firsthand experience in the ICU, Emergency Department, and other areas of the hospital. It was a really cool experience.

– Camilla Boles

Preparing Aspiring Teens for Healthcare (PATH) Program

Building on the success of NextGen MedPros, Healthforce Partners launched the PATH Program. PATH is a Stanislaus Community Foundation funded project supporting Gregori High School's Med Sciences program. The partnership provides the opportunity to pilot innovative curriculum, facilitate hands-on demos and find pathways toward healthcare careers, integrating healthcare Career and Technical Education (CTE) best practices, and exposing the brightest and most determined students to a vast number of healthcare careers.

Healthcare Career Navigator Program

Made possible by a Sutter Health grant, a new Healthcare Career Navigator program will soon launch in Modesto schools through a partnership with Stanislaus County Health Services Agency and Modesto City Schools. The Career Navigator will be focused at the middle school and high school levels, supporting students who have identified an interest in pursuing a career in healthcare. These students will receive an abundance of guidance and mentoring support to ensure they are on the path to success. The program's ultimate goal is to create a seamless, connected pathway from middle school through high school and community college, into a four-year university, and ultimately to a master's program or medical school and residency.

EMT Program

San Joaquin County's EMT program, originally offered as a single cohort through San Joaquin Delta College, has expanded to Lodi Adult School through the Office of Education, and is now hosting cohorts in partnership with Delta College. This expansion localizes access for communities that cannot travel to Delta daily, bringing the program directly to students. Beginning this August, 20 new spots will be available at Lodi Adult School each year, and an additional 20 spots have been approved for dual enrollment for Stockton Unified School District seniors at the Franklin High School campus for the 2027-28 school year.



OTHER KEY ACCOMPLISHMENTS & PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

Youth Engagement

HealthForce Partners worked with the San Joaquin County Office of Education to produce four professional videos showcasing, "A day in the life" of various healthcare professionals. This collaboration provided the opportunity to produce a webinar for students interested in healthcare, which was distributed to all local high school Health Science and Medical Technology pathway CTE teachers. The videos and webinar are live on the "Go SJ" website.



Regional Career Pathway Mapping

HealthForce Partners has identified and documented career path maps for 26 healthcare education/training programs across the Northern San Joaquin Valley Region. This pathway mapping reflects learning opportunities available to all ages, K-12, Community College, and University level programs across San Joaquin, Stanislaus, and Merced Counties. The completed healthcare career pathway mapping will serve as a resource guide for individuals interested in beginning or expanding their healthcare career journey within their community.

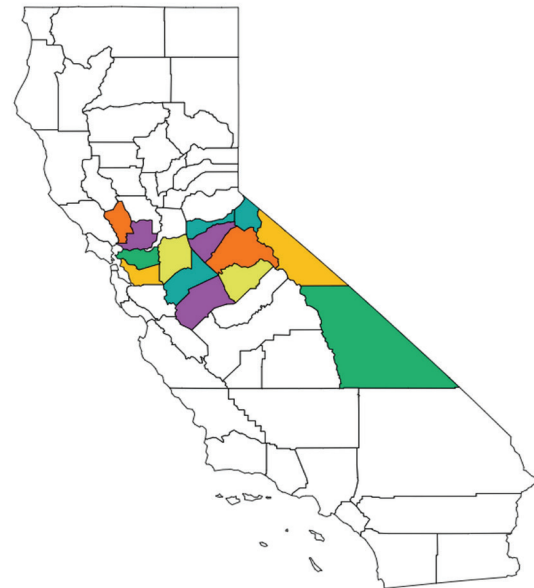
Scholarships, Grants & Funding Support

Through grant funding from San Joaquin County WorkNet, we offered \$100,000 in scholarships to graduate and professional programs for students at University of the Pacific and Stanislaus State on career paths into professions that care for stroke victims. Forty local students in Physician Assistant, Speech-Language Pathology, Physical Therapy, and Nursing programs received awards. This grant also funded scrubs for 60 CNA students at San Joaquin Delta College. Additional funding provided uniforms for 40 new Psychiatric Technician students as well as background checks for all 20 incoming Lodi Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) students for the August 2026 cohort.

EXPANDING OUR REACH

HealthForce Partners California now serves communities across multiple regions of the state and we continue to grow.

- > The Northern San Joaquin Valley (San Joaquin, Stanislaus, and Merced Counties), our home region, continues to expand opportunities for industry and education collaboration.
- > Our Contra Costa/Tri-Valley Region formally launched this spring and Dr. Misty Patton joined HealthForce Partners as its inaugural Regional Director.
- > Our planning effort alongside Aliados Health in Solano County has resulted in a business plan for the launch of the Napa/Solano Region as our third regional footprint.
- > Our continued development of relationships, partnerships and funding opportunities for the Sierra Region will yield our fourth operating region in 2026-27.



MEDICAL EDUCATION COLLABORATIVES

HealthForce Partners California is not just building workforce programs, we are shaping the conversation about how California and the nation address healthcare workforce shortages.

- > **UC Davis School of Medicine Partnership:** Our formal partnership with UC Davis School of Medicine, which launched in September 2025, is focused on growing and retaining a physician workforce in high-need regions of California. Collaboration includes clinical training alignment, curriculum development, and pursuit of local training opportunities that keep future physicians connected to the communities they will serve.
- > **University of the Pacific School of Medicine Convening:** In May, 2026, we convened more than 30 healthcare leaders from across the Northern San Joaquin Valley and Sierra regions at University of the Pacific to engage with President Christopher Callahan as the University explores a School of Medicine on the Stockton campus. The conversation focused on expanding physician training capacity, strengthening healthcare access, and addressing the physician shortage that has long defined the region. University of the Pacific is now actively pursuing that vision, and HealthForce Partners California is committed to supporting it as a backbone partner.
- > **UC Davis Mentor Day:** HealthForce Partners students from NextGen MedPros, PATH and HPPP teamed up with UC Davis REACH Medical Students for a mentoring opportunity focused on high school students and recent graduates from our programs. In partnership with Kaiser Permanente's Medical Education Director, Dr. Howard Young, UC Davis medical students spend valuable time showing our program participants basic healthcare skills and providing guidance on how to get into and succeed in medical school. The mentors share encouragement toward achieving the dream of becoming a doctor.
- > **Aria University:** Aria University President Anand Kuchibotla presented plans for its medical school to HealthForce Partners California's Regional Advisory Council. The new medical school will be located in French Camp, adjacent to San Joaquin General Hospital, positioning the institution to strengthen clinical partnerships and regional workforce development from day one.

THOUGHT LEADERSHIP

- > **Behavioral Health Workforce White Paper:** Co-released with San Joaquin County Behavioral Health Services, this white paper documents measurable breakthroughs in behavioral health workforce development, including the significant reduction of clinician vacancies, paid internships, and more than \$1 million in scholarships awarded. The whitepaper is [available here](#).
- > **Social Mission Alliance Conference:** At the Social Mission Alliance's annual conference in Los Angeles, HealthForce Partners California showcased how the work we began in San Joaquin County is spreading to neighboring counties. San Joaquin County Behavioral Health and San Joaquin Delta College joined HealthForce Partners for a presentation titled, "Sector Partnerships as Engines for Health Workforce Equity."
- > **"Two Gaps, One Crisis" White Paper:** In partnership with Clasp, we co-published a national framework identifying the two structural failures driving clinician shortages across the country and offering a smarter path forward. The paper draws directly on HealthForce Partner's work in San Joaquin County, where our model helped reduce the clinical vacancy rates. The paper is available at clasp.com/onecrisis.
- > **San Joaquin A+ Better Together Leadership Initiative:** HealthForce Partners California was invited to join the inaugural cohort of San Joaquin A+'s Better Together Initiative, which brings together senior leaders across sectors to build the trust-based relationships needed to address complex regional challenges including educational gaps and economic disparities.
- > **COMET Collaborative:** HealthForce Partners California is an active participant in this regional initiative connecting education and healthcare partners across rural and underserved communities in Northern and Central California and Oregon.

LOOKING AHEAD

Key Priorities:

- > Strengthen and expand industry and education partnerships to address regional healthcare shortages
- > Scale current workforce programming to create higher impact on health care professions of greatest need
- > Continue to secure new funding streams for capacity-building and innovative program development



OUR PARTNERS

HealthForce Partners California is, at its core, a partnership organization. Our work is made possible, and multiplied, by the employers, educators, funders, and community leaders who bring resources, relationships, and commitment to this shared mission.

Aria University

California Department of Health Care Access &
Information

Central Valley Doctors Health System

Chabot-Las Positas Community College District

City of Modesto

Community Medical Centers

Dignity Health St. Joseph's Medical Center

Golden Valley Health Centers

Health Career Connection

Health net

Health Plan of San Joaquin

Hospice of San Joaquin

Hospital Council of Northern
& Central California

John Muir Health

Kaiser Permanente

Lodi Community Foundation

Lumira Health

Merced County Worknet

San Joaquin A+

San Joaquin Adult Education Consortium

San Joaquin Community Foundation

San Joaquin County

San Joaquin County Behavioral Health Services

San Joaquin County Health Care
Services Agency

San Joaquin County Office of Education

San Joaquin County Worknet

San Joaquin Delta College

San Joaquin General Hospital

San Joaquin Health Centers

Stanford Health Care Tri-Valley

Stanislaus Community Foundation

Stanislaus County Behavioral Health
& Recovery Services

Stanislaus County Health Services Agency

Stanislaus State University

Sutter Health

Touro University California

UC Davis Betty Irene Moore School of Nursing

UC Davis School of Medicine

University of the Pacific

Yosemite Community College District

OUR BOARD

We've expanded strategically and are now governed by a 15-member board of directors, reflecting the depth of partnerships and regional commitment required to advance healthcare workforce development. This expanded structure allows us to deepen partnerships, expand our regional reach, and sustain the collaborative work that drives real change in healthcare workforce development.

Our new Executive Committee includes:

- > **Chair:** Brooke McCollough, Adventist Health Lodi Memorial Hospital
- > **Vice Chair:** Leslie Abasta, CEO, Lumira HealthCare
- > **Secretary:** Ruben Imperial, Director, Stanislaus County Behavioral Health & Recovery Services
- > **Treasurer:** Scott Knight, CEO, Sutter Health Tracy Community Hospital
- > **Employer Partner Representative:** Greg Diederich, CEO, Community Medical Centers
- > **Education Partner Representative:** Nicoleta Bugnariu, Dean, School of Health Sciences, University of the Pacific
- > **Regional Representative:** Misty Jones, CEO, Stanford Health Care Tri-Valley
- > **Ex Officio:** Paul Lanning, CEO, HealthForce Partners California

Additional members of the Governing Board include:

- > **Dr. Rohini Bogineni**, MD, FACS, Trauma Medical Director and Director of Robotic Surgery, Central Valley Doctors Health System
- > **Richard Castro**, CEO, San Joaquin General Hospital
- > **Dr. Tami Hendriksz**, Chief Academic Officer, Touro University California
- > **Anand Kuchibolta**, President, Aria University
- > **Fay Vieira**, Director, San Joaquin County Behavioral Health Services
- > **Dr. Anitra Williams**, Area Chief Nurse Executive, Kaiser Permanente Central Valley
- > **David Ziolkowski**, President, Dignity Health Central Valley Market

When HealthForce Partners California was founded in 2018, the vision was clear: build sustainable career pathways that empower individuals and strengthen communities.

What began as a regional effort in the Northern San Joaquin Valley is now a multi-regional organization. This past year we crossed a new threshold.

From reducing a county's behavioral health vacancy rate from 24% to 3%, to supporting dozens of nursing graduates who will serve our communities, to the hundreds of students discovering their future in healthcare through our programs, every outcome represents a person whose trajectory changed.

Through innovative partnerships and workforce solutions, we will continue to catalyze the growth of a skilled and diverse healthcare workforce. We will remain steadfast and dedicated to this mission, and to eliminating healthcare access challenges using a collaborative approach, innovative thinking and dynamic partnerships.

