

APPRENTICESHIP

Family Support Subcommittee Hearing on Health Profession Opportunity Grants

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A few months ago, I had the opportunity to participate in a congressional hearing related, in part, to the value of the apprenticeship model for health professions and the wrap-around services often associated with these apprenticeship programs. The ways and means worker and family support subcommittee conducted a hearing to discuss the past successes and future uses of the Health Profession Opportunity Grants (HPOG). The HPOG program is a demonstration grant that invests in programs (whole person care), to train low-income people for careers in health care professions.

One of the many special things about HPOG is that it provides an array of supportive services to help its participants thrive, including referrals to subsidize child care, transportation, tuition, books, fees, supplies, uniforms and more. Not only are the participants themselves benefiting from wrap-around support services, they are receiving first-hand knowledge on the positive impacts these whole person care models provide to individuals, which are also extremely beneficial in health care treatment.

The hearing sought to explore the importance of investing in training programs for people to enter the allied health and behavioral health professions and my testimony spoke to the importance of investing in these training programs for underserved communities, including the formerly incarcerated. Given my role leading the healthcare subcommittee on apprenticeship, as part of the California Governor's Interagency Advisory Committee on Apprenticeship, I provided information about the offender mentor certification program, the inmate disability assistant program, and best practices in providing health care career training opportunities to people who have criminal histories. I was excited to highlight a few of the rehabilitative programs in the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation, but even more proud to establish a nexus between these programs and how an apprenticeship model can be used to close the health workforce gap through scaling up these types of programs.

This hearing was especially important to California as our need for a diverse, well-rounded health care workforce is critical to accomplish many of the state's initiatives surrounding whole person care for all. If HPOG is renewed it will give entities in California the ability to apply for additional funding for Apprenticeship programs.