

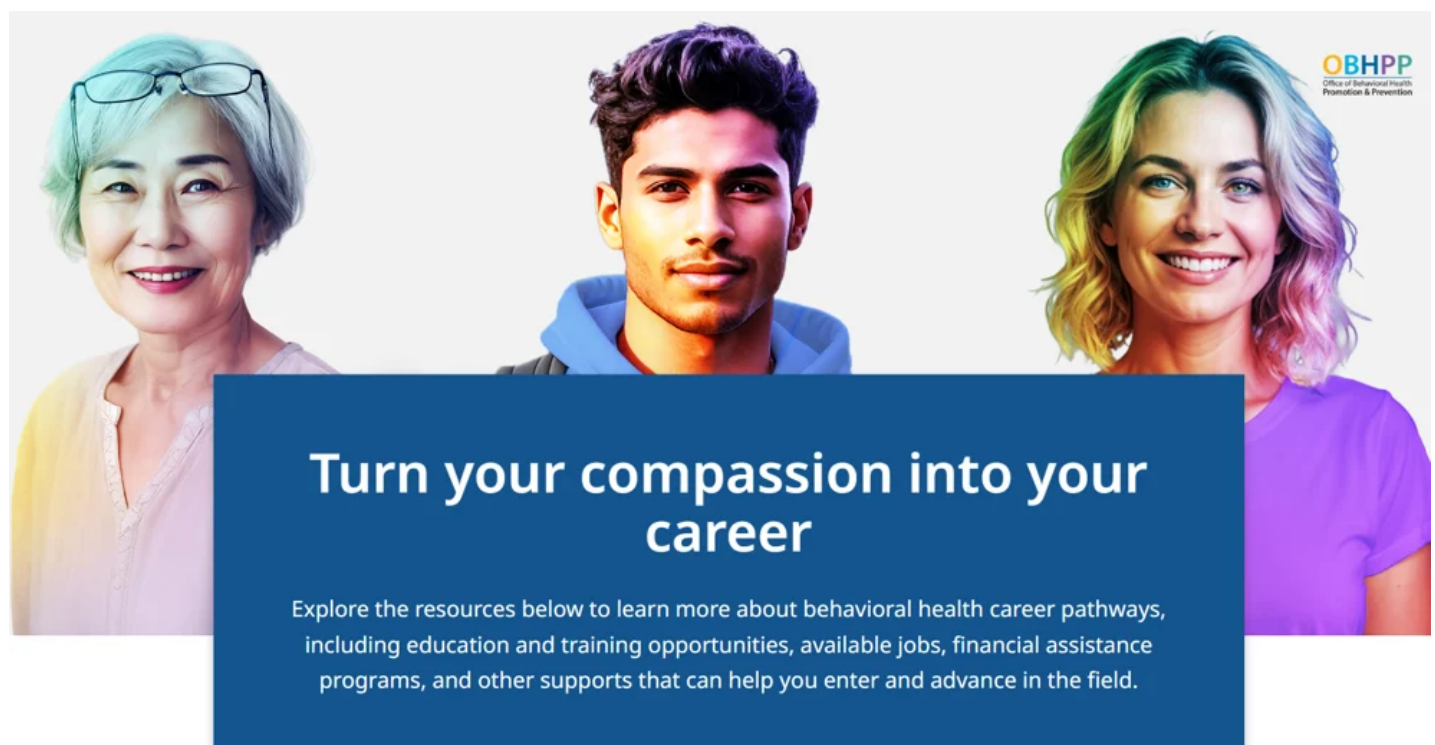
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Healey moves to grow behavioral health workforce as access lags

One in 10 residents reported an unmet behavioral health need, a state survey found

Alison Kuznitz

Aug 27, 2026



The Healey administration announced a new behavioral healthcare workforce recruitment campaign on Thursday, Aug. 27, 2026.

Screenshot

STATE HOUSE, BOSTON, Aug. 27, 2026.....The Healey administration rolled out a statewide campaign Thursday to bolster career interest in the behavioral healthcare sector, where persistent workforce shortages have made it difficult for some Bay Staters to access care.

The campaign, called "Turn Your Compassion Into Your Career," launched "this summer" and will continue into September with a mix of billboards, digital and social media, videos and community partnerships, Gov. Maura Healey's office said. The campaign's website delves into different behavioral healthcare roles; education and job-training programs; scholarships, grants and state financial aid programs; and job search and MassHire resources.

"Many people are drawn to work that helps others, but they may not know how many career pathways exist within behavioral health or where to begin," said Funmi Aguocho, assistant commissioner of the Office of Behavioral Health Promotion and Prevention. "This campaign gives people a clear starting point and connects them with information that can help them turn their compassion, skills, cultural knowledge, and lived experience into impactful work."

Healey administration spokespeople did not immediately disclose the cost of the campaign. The fiscal 2026 budget called for a \$500,000 mental health workforce pipeline program, aimed at encouraging a "culturally, ethnically and linguistically diverse behavioral health workforce through collaboration between colleges and behavioral health providers."

The campaign's website outlines the types of responsibilities and skills needed for behavioral health jobs, including peer-to-peer professionals, community health workers, mental health counselors, social workers, psychiatrists and psychologists. Campaign materials are available in English, Spanish, Brazilian Portuguese, Vietnamese, Arabic, Haitian Creole and Simplified Chinese, the administration said.

"A diverse workforce helps ensure that behavioral health programs and services are responsive to the needs of the communities they serve and that individuals can access support from professionals who understand and reflect their experiences," the website says. "As demand for behavioral health programs and services continues to grow, there is a need for people from all backgrounds to help build a stronger, more equitable behavioral health system."

More than one in five residents reported having a behavioral healthcare visit in 2025, and more than one in six individuals paid entirely out of pocket for the appointment, according to an annual survey from the Center for Health Information and Analysis. One in 10 residents had an unmet behavioral health need, which 5.4% attributed to the cost of care.

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May 2026



Massachusetts is "facing a behavioral health (BH) access crisis" that's largely fueled by provider shortages "across all settings," says a May report from the Health Policy Commission's Behavioral Health Workforce Center. Multiple inpatient psychiatric facilities and intensive outpatient programs have shuttered since 2020, and more than 25% of independent psychotherapy providers accept only cash payment that's partly due to low insurance reimbursement rates.

Providers with master's degrees delivered the majority of non-medical psychotherapy and psychiatric evaluation services but "often received the lowest reimbursement for those services," the HPC report found. Commercial insurers reimbursed those clinicians for psychotherapy at about 66% of the rate for physicians.

Health and Human Services Secretary Kiame Mahaniah on Thursday embarked on a statewide community mental health tour in Lawrence, where he visited a clinic run by Beth Israel Lahey Health Behavioral Services. Mahaniah plans to visit other centers and organizations focused on prevention, treatment and recovery in the coming months.

"This tour will not only amplify the good work happening in our communities but will also help make sure residents know the resources available to them to preempt an emergency response," Mahaniah said.

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