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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**\$10 MILLION IN GRANT FUNDING AVAILABLE FOR PROGRAMS
THAT PROVIDE EDUCATION FOR HEALTH CARE PROVIDERS**

CalOptima Health launches first phase of \$50 million Provider Workforce Development Initiative

ORANGE, Calif. (January 3, 2024) — CalOptima Health has announced \$10 million in grant funding for Orange County schools, colleges and universities with programs that support and educate nurses and other health care professionals. This investment is part of a five-year, \$50 million Provider Workforce Development strategic initiative to address health disparities and support community health centers and safety net providers.

“Investing in our community’s health care workforce will directly impact the ability of our nearly one million members to access essential medical and behavioral health care for years to come,” said Michael Hunn, CalOptima Health Chief Executive Officer. “The grants for educational institutions will strengthen our ability to address health disparities to better serve our insured members.”

CalOptima Health will release the \$10 million for competitive grants to fund programs in the high-need areas of nursing, primary care and behavioral health, with an emphasis on equity and communities most impacted by health disparities. CalOptima Health anticipates that potential grantees may propose a range of activities, such as stipend programs for students who commit to serving Orange County Medi-Cal members, expansion of existing higher education programs to accommodate more students, expansion of clinical rotations to more students or increased faculty recruitment. The grant application period is December 15, 2023, to January 31, 2024, with awards planned for March 2024. The [notice of funding opportunity](#) is posted on the [CalOptima Health website](#).

“There is no shortage of students interested in becoming health care professionals, but the lack of available slots in existing programs and the rising cost of higher education often keep them from pursuing these careers,” said Donna Laverdiere, CalOptima Health Executive Director of Strategic Development, who is leading this initiative. “This funding is truly an investment in the future and will make a meaningful difference in the number of health care providers who can deliver equitable access to quality care for Orange County’s vulnerable Medi-Cal population.”

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About CalOptima Health

A county organized health system, CalOptima Health provides quality health care coverage for low-income children, adults, seniors and people with disabilities in Orange County, California. CalOptima Health’s mission is to serve member health with excellence and dignity, respecting the value and needs of each person. CalOptima Health serves nearly 964,000 members with a network of more than 10,400 primary care doctors and specialists and 43 acute and rehab hospitals.