



# Florida Behavioral Health Association

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## November 14-18 Celebrates National Apprenticeship Week

**Tallahassee, Fla.** – This week, the Florida Behavioral Health Association (FBHA) celebrates National Apprenticeship Week, an opportunity to highlight a proven and industry-driven training model that the organization and its community providers have worked to deploy in Florida to help bolster the mental health and substance use disorder treatment workforce.

“FBHA is dedicated to building the mental health and substance use disorder workforce throughout the state by connecting individuals with career opportunities,” said FBHA President and CEO Brown-Woofter. “This apprentice program is aimed at growing the behavioral health field by supporting recruitment and retention efforts for community providers and by encouraging individuals to explore careers in health care.”

FBHA was awarded a grant by the Florida Department of Education in July 2021 to develop the first behavioral health apprenticeship model in Florida.

Kevin O’Farrell, Chancellor of the Division of Career and Adult Education at the Florida Department of Education said, “Florida needs skilled talent in a broad range of growing industries, and under Governor DeSantis’ leadership, Florida’s businesses realize that one of the most effective ways to both acquire and

keep that talent is to train workers themselves. The Florida Behavioral Health Association acts as a model recognizing the benefits and effectiveness of work-based learning. We are thrilled by their participation and dedication to providing individuals with a pathway to high-wage, in-demand and rewarding careers through apprenticeships.”

There are currently three different apprenticeship programs: **Addictions Counselor**, **Behavioral Health Technician** and **Peer Specialist**. Since launching the program, FBHA has enrolled nearly a dozen professionals in the apprenticeship program and is continuing to admit people into all three tracks. The program links community providers with individuals interested in behavioral health by providing support through free training and financial resources to qualified apprentices.

Charli Cole, a 47-year-old special projects director at [STEPS](#) in Orlando said the apprenticeship program was life-changing for her and the clients she serves.

“The apprentice program gave me the opportunity for on-the-job training and experience to help me advance my education and job skills while maintaining my employment. Thanks to full support from my employer, pursuing the certification for the Addictions Counselor gave me more confidence. It also encouraged me to go back to school and further my education, knowing that I had such a supportive work environment,” said Cole.

For more information on the apprenticeship program and to enroll, please visit

<https://healthquestworks.org/>

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*The Florida Behavioral Health Association is a non-profit organization that provides statewide leadership on behavioral health policy and practice. FBHA supports member agencies offering services to those in need of mental health and substance use disorder assistance and support. Its members include a broad range of provider types, ranging from small specialty organizations to comprehensive treatment*

*organizations with multiple locations within a geographic region. For more information, please visit [www.floridabha.org](http://www.floridabha.org).*