**HealthierHere Partners with 39 Organizations to Address Workforce Crisis**

*Invests in Diverse Initiatives to Mitigate Worker Shortages and Burnout; Emphasis on Equity*

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Like most of the nation, King County faces an acute and growing shortfall of healthcare workers. In the face of the crisis, non-profit collaborative HealthierHere has launched a $5.0 million, cross-sector effort that will support 39 local organizations to develop or enhance initiatives that address pressing workforce challenges.

The need is dire, according to HealthierHere’s Chief Health Transformation Officer, Michael McKee. “We have more than 150 organizations in our network and virtually all of them are facing challenges with worker shortages, staff burnout, recruitment, and retention of staff – which have only been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. Without enough workers, communities’ access to essential care is impacted – ultimately reducing the number of people who can be served.”

He pointed to [new polling released by the WA Safe + Healthy coalition](https://www.wasafeandhealthy.com/news/poll-half-of-wa-healthcare-workers-likely-to-quit) showing 49% of healthcare workers in Washington say they are **“likely to leave the healthcare profession in the next few years” and 79% report being burned out.**

HealthierHere is devoting funding it has received for its work as the Accountable Community of Health for King County to invest in the effort, with an emphasis on increasing diversity of the overall workforce to ensure it reflects the communities served.

“It was critical to us that these resources were equitably invested in a variety of HealthierHere’s partners actively working to address health disparities,” said Marya Gingrey, HealthierHere’s Chief Equity and Strategy Officer. “We wanted to make sure that Black, Indigenous, People of Color, limited English proficient, refugee, immigrant and LGBTQI communities are represented in the workforce, and that organizations have the flexibility to decide for themselves what is needed to achieve that goal.”

The effort will support a wide array of initiatives at local organizations – including Tribal/Native-led/serving organizations, hospitals, federally qualified health centers, behavioral health agencies, and community-based health and human services organizations. Organizations were able to select up to two focus areas of funding, including healthcare and social service apprenticeships and internships; licensure supervisory support; recruitment and retention; academic partnerships; and staff wellness and burnout prevention.

 “This investment has enabled Nakani Native Program to support our staff and foster retention in very significant ways, including childcare stipends, cultural days off to enhance mental well-being and other ways that improve staff morale,” says Lisa Powers, Interim Executive Director for the Nakani Native Program, one of the partner organizations. “This helps lift personal burdens and provides inspiration and motivation. Staff who are acknowledged and appreciated become a stronger and more unified team, able to advance the work we do to improve the health outcomes for our Native communities.”

With support from HealthierHere’s investment, MultiCare Health System will work to increase the number of student enrollments for their certified nursing assistant and licensed practical nursing programs, helping streamline them into the healthcare workforce.

“MultiCare is committed to addressing health disparities in the community, providing equitable access to care and improving health outcomes that ultimately make our community stronger,” said Lois Bernstein, chief community executive for MultiCare Health System. “We understand the restraints of not being able to go back to school, including financial and family obligations and have created our workforce programs with these barriers in mind. We are proud to support our communities and workforce through growth and development opportunities where we pay for the training program and certification testing, provide clinical rotations and pay the trainee a wage.”

The activities are funded through November 2023, with the understanding that these widespread workforce issues will also require sustained advocacy for system-level changes.

 Awardees include:

[Arms Around You](https://www.armsaroundyou.org/), [Asian Counseling and Resource Center](https://acrs.org/), [Atlantic Street Center](https://atlanticstreetcenter.org/), [Chinese Information and Service Center](https://cisc-seattle.org/), [Center for MultiCultural Health](https://www.centerformulticulturalhealth.org/), [Consejo Counseling and Referral Services](https://consejocounseling.org/), [Country Doctor Community Health Centers](https://cdchc.org/), [Cowlitz Indian Tribe](https://www.cowlitz.org/), [Downtown Emergency Service Center](https://www.desc.org/), [El Centro de la Raza](http://www.elcentrodelaraza.org/), [Evergreen Treatment Services](https://www.evergreentreatment.org/), [Falis Community Service](http://www.faliscommunityservices.com/), [Hepatitis Education Project](https://hepeducation.org/), [International Community Health Services](https://www.ichs.com/), [Kent Youth and Family Services](https://kyfs.org/), [KidVantage](https://kidvantagenw.org/), [Living Well Kent](https://livingwellkent.org/index.html), [Lutheran Community Services Northwest](https://lcsnw.org/), [MultiCare Health System](https://www.multicare.org/), [Nakani Native Program](https://www.nakani.org/), [Navos](https://www.navos.org/), [Neighborcare Health](https://neighborcare.org/), [Neighborhood House](https://nhwa.org/), [Peer WA](https://www.peerwa.org/), [People's Harm Reduction Alliance](http://phra.org/), [Recovery Café](https://recoverycafe.org/), [Sea Mar Community Health Centers](https://www.seamar.org/), [Seattle Children’s](https://www.seattlechildrens.org/), [Seattle Indian Health Board](https://www.sihb.org/), [Sisters In Common](https://www.sistersincommon.org/), [Solid Ground,](https://www.solid-ground.org/) [Southwest Youth and Family Services](https://www.swyfs.org/), [Therapeutic Health Services](https://ths-wa.org/?gclid=CjwKCAiA3pugBhAwEiwAWFzwdUevAsaZMwXvE7dSO2_sdGYkJseOLAwP-l35EoNZBgGSRgnnDkxYfxoCPFQQAvD_BwE), [United Indians of All Tribes Foundation](https://unitedindians.org/), [Unkitawa](https://unkitawa.org/), [Upower](https://u-power.org/), [Valley Cities](https://www.valleycities.org/), [Valley Medical Center](https://www.valleymed.org/), and [Villa Communitaria](https://villacomunitaria.org/)

**About HealthierHere**
HealthierHere is a non-profit collaborative dedicated to eliminating health disparities and advancing equity in King County through collective action. More at <https://healthierhere.org/>

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