

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: September 30, 2024**

**Ashland Community Health Foundation**  
**Contact: Stephanie Roland, 541-482-0367 x2**  
**stephanie.roland@achfoundation.org**



## **ACHF Receives \$1M Grant to Establish Funding for Local Health Care Workforce Training**

*Investments will build the behavioral health care workforce to meet critical needs*

**ASHLAND** — Ashland Community Health Foundation (ACHF) is the recipient of a \$1 million grant from CareOregon to establish the Health Care Workforce Training Fund. The fund will be invested over the next three years to help build the behavioral health care workforce in the Rogue Valley.

When considering the foundation for this generous grant, CareOregon recognized ACHF's successful, 22-year history of administering over \$1.5 million in scholarships for nursing and allied health students.

In the 2023 Oregon Health Care Workforce Needs Assessment, the Oregon Health Policy Board and Oregon Health Authority set seven priorities for meeting the needs of patients and communities across the state. Key among the priorities is to "expand training, education and career pathways for many segments of the health care workforce," such as behavioral health.

In partnership with Jackson Care Connect, ACHF will implement a multi-focused approach to increase access to behavioral health services for low-income and vulnerable populations by supporting the training of students and peer support providers in health care professions through scholarships, internships, continuing education, and faculty development.

The Health Care Workforce Training Fund will be invested in the following ways:

- onboarding of a full-time, tenure-track faculty position in the Clinical Mental Health Counseling program at Southern Oregon University for the 2024-2025 academic year
- paid internships for behavioral health counseling students at designated nonprofit and/or public agencies in Jackson County that serve the Medicaid population over the next two years

- scholarships for second-year students enrolled in a mental health counseling program at an eligible educational institution in 2025 and 2026, with priority given to students living and working in the Rogue Valley who intend to work with agencies serving the Medicaid population after graduation
- funding continuing education for individuals providing peer support in behavioral health settings for low-income and vulnerable populations
- the establishment of an endowment to support future behavioral health work force development needs

"We're excited to partner with Ashland Community Health Foundation on these efforts," said Jennifer Lind, CEO of Jackson Care Connect. "Our community health assessment has identified that both increasing access to health care and adding behavioral health providers are critical needs. With this fund, ACHF is creating programs that will have a significant and long-term positive impact for our members, the provider workforce, and community at large."

ACHF is grateful to CareOregon for their investment in the health care workforce in the community through our foundation.

Ashland Community Health Foundation is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) leading philanthropic efforts to advance innovative and equitable approaches to community health and wellness. Contributions to the foundation, including the Health Care Workforce Training Fund, may be tax-deductible and can be given securely through our website or mailed to our office at 123 Clear Creek Drive, Suite 101, Ashland, OR 97520.

###

*Photo attached.*

*Ashland Community Health Foundation awards \$110,000.00 to Southern Oregon University for faculty position from the newly established Health Care Workforce Training Fund. Pictured left to right: Stephanie Roland, ACHF Executive Director, Jeff McCullough ACHF Board President, Rick Bailey, Southern Oregon University President, and Jennifer Lind, CEO of Jackson Care Connect.*