

Building Futures Together

Grant-funded program prepares paraprofessionals to provide specialized care in response to opioid epidemic

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The Health Resources and Services Administration has awarded the University of New Hampshire Institute on Disability (IOD) a \$2.4 million grant for [Building Futures Together](#), a program seeking to prepare 98 paraprofessionals in healthcare and school settings to provide specialized enhanced care coordination to children, youth and their caregivers whose parents are impacted by opioid and other substance use disorders. With cost posing a significant barrier for many paraprofessionals seeking further training, the grant allows the program to be offered at no charge as well as provide stipends to participants.

Building Futures Together is pioneered by [Joanne Malloy](#), research associate professor at the IOD, who says the program will address the high need for support of youth who are at risk for behavioral health disorders as well as their families.

“There is pressing need to provide community-based care coordination to children, adolescents and families affected by opioid use and other substance use disorders,” Malloy says. “We are hopeful this project will address our workforce shortages while standing up a high-quality practice to support some of our most vulnerable children and youth.”

[Nicholas Mian](#), assistant professor of [psychology](#) at [UNH Manchester](#), serves as co-principal investigator on the program and supports development of the training curriculum. Building Futures Together focuses on intensive, on-the-job training, which Mian says better prepares trainees to provide enhanced care.

“The opioid crisis has had a lasting impact on mental health, and the need for trained professionals to care for our state’s most vulnerable children, youth and families has never been higher,” Mian says. “Through hands-on training, the Building Futures

Together program develops the specific skills, knowledge and competencies for providers to better support these high-need populations.”

Exploring topics like trauma and toxic stress, peer recovery support, family- and youth-driven care, family systems and addiction, the program’s curriculum is designed to strengthen the specialized paraprofessional workforce in school districts and community health settings throughout the state.

In his [proclamation for National Apprenticeship Week](#), Governor Chris Sununu recognized the Building Futures Together team for their commitment to the advancement of apprenticeship and workforce development in New Hampshire.

Visit the [Building Futures Together website](#) to learn more.

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