

South Bay Social Worker Chosen for Mental Health Scholars Academy Program

Kaiser Permanente higher education scholarship to help address national shortage of mental health services

“My role as a Social Worker is to give hope to people experiencing a crisis,” says Christine Nguyen, licensed clinical social worker for Kaiser Permanente South Bay. “That has become more important than ever, due to the COVID pandemic and social injustices impacting so many.” Stressors over the last 19 months have accelerated the rise in demand for mental health services across the United States. To help increase the availability of mental health services, Kaiser Permanente introduced a higher education scholarship program, the Mental Health Scholars Academy (MHSA) in 2020. Christine is one of 10 applicants accepted into the program this year and will pursue a doctorate degree in Social Work, with a concentration in Clinical Leadership, at Loma Linda University in the fall.



*Christine Nguyen, LCSW
South Bay Medical Center*

Kaiser Permanente established MHSA to sponsor education and training opportunities in mental health for its employees in California. The program provides 75% tuition support for employees to complete a mental health graduate degree leading to a career as a therapist or clinical counselor, social worker, or psychologist. MHSA also develops innovative learning opportunities to support evidence-based mental health treatments in the communities that Kaiser Permanente serves.

“The nationwide shortage of mental health care providers is a real concern, and the industry needs more people with the advanced skills necessary to truly make a difference,” says Ozzie Martinez, chief administrative officer at Kaiser Permanente South Bay. “Kaiser Permanente’s Mental Health Scholars Academy is one way we can help solve this issue, by creating career paths with academic programs to transform our workforce. We’re especially thrilled that Christine will be participating this year as a representative of South Bay Medical Center.”

As a Mental Health Scholar, Christine hopes to influence patient care from a leadership level and is committed to helping reduce health disparities for underserved communities. She has worked at Kaiser Permanente South Bay for more than 5 years and is honored to have been selected for the prestigious MHSA program.

“At its core, Social Work is about compassion for people and communities when they are at their most vulnerable,” says Christine. “By dedicating ourselves to the continued pursuit of excellence in our work, we can create a lasting impact for the advancement of all.”

Learn more:

The Mental Health Scholars Academy is available to full- or part-time employees at Kaiser Permanente facilities in California. To learn more, visit scholarsacademyinside.kp.org/mentalhealthscholars/.