From: I C
To: DCA, BBS Info@DCA
Cc: Kitamura, Christina@DCA; Helms, Rosanne@DCA
Subject: Request for Future Agenda Item — Guaranteed Access to Supervised Practice for Registered Associates
Date: Monday, August 3, 2026 12:45:36 PM

Dear Executive Officer Sodergren, Chair Strack, and Members of the Board:

I am writing as a California registered associate who has invested years of education, training, professional development, and financial resources into entering the behavioral-health profession.

I support professional licensure, supervision, ethical accountability, and the protection of consumers. My concern is not with the requirement that associates obtain supervised experience. My concern is that California requires associates to obtain that experience while providing no reliable mechanism through which qualified associates can access paid, qualifying supervised work.

An associate's ability to earn income, develop professionally, accumulate required hours, and eventually qualify for licensure is currently dependent on whether a private employer decides to provide that opportunity. When employment cannot be secured, the associate cannot independently create an alternative pathway, even after completing the required graduate education and obtaining registration.

In my own situation, I have made genuine and sustained efforts to obtain employment in the field but remain unable to secure an appropriate associate position. As a result, I cannot adequately support myself through the profession for which I trained. Employment outside the profession is also complicated because employers may reasonably anticipate that an associate will leave once a qualifying clinical opportunity becomes available.

This creates a professional and economic trap. Associates need qualifying employment to advance, but their education and professional trajectory may simultaneously make them appear temporary to employers outside the field.

I am not requesting automatic licensure, exemption from supervision, or entitlement to a particular private-sector job. I am requesting that California examine whether qualified registered associates should be guaranteed access to a state-approved supervised-practice pathway.

Such a pathway could include state-supported clinical residencies, employer wage and supervision subsidies, a centralized placement system, portable supervision, minimum compensation protections, transfer rights when placements fail, and targeted placements in county, nonprofit, school-based, rural, veteran-serving, and Medi-Cal behavioral-health programs.

I respectfully request that the Board:

1. Place associate access to paid supervised practice on a future Workforce Development Committee and Policy and Advocacy Committee agenda.
2. Direct staff to collect data regarding registered associates who are unemployed, underemployed, unable to accrue hours, or unable to locate qualified supervision.
3. Examine regulatory, legislative, and budgetary options for creating a guaranteed supervised-practice pathway.
4. Consult with HCAI, counties, professional associations, graduate programs, employers, supervisors, and currently registered associates.

When the State mandates professional experience, qualified individuals should have a fair and economically viable opportunity to obtain that experience. Public protection and associate workforce protections are not opposing goals. A stable, properly compensated, and adequately supervised associate workforce can advance both.

Please distribute this correspondence to the members of the Board and include it as written public comment for the August 13–14, 2026 Board meeting. I also intend to participate in public comment.

Respectfully,

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