**The Rural Integrated Behavioral Health in Primary Care Project (RIBHPC)**

**$10,000 Stipends for Participating Students**

**Project Overview**

Maine’s rurality translates into isolation, limited access to resources and services, and fewer health professionals. Maine has particularly high rates of mental health and substance use disorders, which are compounded by the fact that mental health services fall woefully short.

The University of Maine Rural Integrated Behavioral Health in Primary Care (RIBHPC) training program will help to address the behavioral health care workforce needs in rural Maine by preparing social work and clinical psychology graduate students for careers in rural integrated behavioral health. Through didactic and experiential learning, students will develop the professional skills needed to function effectively in integrated health care teams. This project is funded by the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) from 2021-2025 and provides student participants with a $10,000 stipend.

The program aims to:

* Increase the number of MSW and Clinical Psychology PhD students who graduate with experiential training in rural behavioral healthcare
* Develop, in those students, knowledge and professional skills in the practice of integrated behavioral healthcare in primary care
* Create a network of training site partners committed to ongoing professional development for integrated behavioral healthcare providers

*To learn more about the RIBHPC program see*: https://umaine.edu/ruralhealth/

**Who Is Eligible?**

* MSW students who are completing the Specialization Year Field Placement **during the academic year** (Unfortunately, summer block placements do not meet the funders’ criteria).
* Students who are interested in completing a specialization year placement focused on integrated behavioral health within a medically underserved community
* Students who have taken the elective SWK 586, Advanced Clinical Social Work Practice in Integrated Behavioral Healthcare before –or plan to take it concurrently with—their participation in the RIBHPC program.
* Students who are willing to complete the additional curricular requirements of the RIBHPC program (i.e., a 1-credit year-long seminar, participation in continuing education series)
* Students who are willing to commit to working in a community that is medically underserved in an integrated behavioral health setting upon graduation

**Potential Placement Sites**

Experiential training sites will be expanding throughout the 4-year RIBHPC program. Current experiential training partners include:

* Aroostook Mental Health Center (AMHC)
* Northern Light Acadia Hospital
* Northern Light Family Medicine
* Behavioral Health Center
* Penobscot Community Healthcare Center
* Wabanaki Health and Wellness
* Mount Desert Island Hospital

**RIBHPC Curriculum**

* Students participating in the RIBHPC program will enroll in INT 610-an interdisciplinary (Psychology and Social Work) 1-credit seminar. This is a synchronous, online seminar running from 5:30 to 7:30, bi-weekly on Thursdays.
* The RIBHPC program will offer a continuing education program each fall and spring that participants will be expected to attend. These events will feature guest speakers presenting on topics related to emerging and innovative practice in integrated behavioral healthcare.
* Students must take (preferably before their participation in RIBHPC) the 3-credit online elective, SWK 586, Advanced Clinical Social Work Practice in Integrated Healthcare.
* Students will complete their specialization year placement in a designated training site for rural integrated behavioral health—preferably with a connection to primary care, and in interdisciplinary teams
* Students, who successfully complete the requirements of the RIBHPC program, will receive a certificate in Rural Integrated Behavioral Health on graduation.

**Application Process**

Applications materials will be made available in the fall prior to the year of participation. We will be able to accept about 22 students in each of the last three years of the program (2022-2025)

For further information about the RIBHPC Program or the application process, please contact the Project Coordinator, Dyan Walsh. (Email and phone contact information to be added after September 27, 2021 when she officially begins in her position.)