



# CalOptima Health



# CHAPMAN UNIVERSITY

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### **CALOPTIMA HEALTH GRANTS \$5 MILLION FOR PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT SCHOLARSHIPS AT CHAPMAN UNIVERSITY** *Grant will increase the number of low-income students training to become licensed physician assistants as part of CalOptima Health's effort to boost local health care workforce*

**ORANGE, Calif. (August 28, 2024)** — Leaders from Chapman University and CalOptima Health as well as Orange County Board of Supervisors Chairman Donald P. Wagner and Supervisor Vicente Sarmiento gathered today to announce a \$5 million grant approved by the CalOptima Health Board of Directors to provide scholarships to academically qualified, low-income students for the university's licensed physician assistant (PA) program. The grant is part of CalOptima Health's [Provider Workforce Development Initiative](#), which aims to address shortages and gaps in the Orange County health care workforce that serves the Medi-Cal population.

With this funding, Chapman University will award full-tuition scholarships to up to 29 students across the five-year program. These scholarships will help diversify the student composition of the PA program, offering qualified low-income Orange County students access to the education necessary to become licensed PAs. Following graduation, students who received the scholarships will be required to work at least five years in a medically underserved community in Orange County, which will help address staffing shortages in those areas. The students will also boost available PA clinical training sites in underserved areas by requiring graduates to become clinical educators in Chapman's PA program.

"Our Provider Workforce Development Initiative aims to increase access to high-quality care for our members by tackling one of the root causes of the worker shortages — affordability of a health care education," said Michael Hunn, CEO of CalOptima Health. "We want to remove barriers so Orange County students of all backgrounds can receive the necessary training to become one of tomorrow's health care providers for the Medi-Cal population. Helping more students receive their PA education at Chapman University serves our members and others in the county seeking quality care."

"This recognition from CalOptima Health, through the Provider Workforce Development Initiative, reaffirms Chapman's central role in helping shape the future of health care in Orange County," said Daniele Struppa, president of Chapman University. "It also underscores Chapman's commitment to our local community and to creating opportunities for a world-class health care education for talented students from our own backyard."

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The grant recognition event also included a tour of the Harry and Diane Rinker Health Science Campus, a state-of-the-art, graduate-only campus that focuses on health science education and research. The campus features labs and classrooms equipped with the latest learning and research tools, shared learning spaces to foster student collaboration, and other resources for students such as a wellness walk, fitness center and career services.

“I am proud that CalOptima Health has chosen to invest in this exceptional program to train highly qualified PAs,” said Chairman Wagner, whose Third District includes Irvine, where Chapman University’s Rinker Health Science Campus is located. “These scholarships will not only directly increase the supply of health care workers but provide new opportunities for Orange County students who dream of going into this field.”

“As Vice Chair of CalOptima Health, I want to underscore that we are acutely aware of the health care staffing challenges facing our County and are actively tackling these issues through our Provider Workforce Development Initiative,” said Supervisor Sarmiento, whose Second District includes Orange, where Chapman University has its main campus. “Programs like the one at Chapman University are transformative, not only changing the lives of scholarship recipients but also significantly enhancing the overall health care landscape of our community.”

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## PHOTOS FOR DOWNLOAD

 [Press Photos](#)

## ABOUT

### **About CalOptima Health**

A county organized health system, CalOptima Health provides quality health care coverage for low-income children, adults, seniors and people with disabilities in Orange County, California. CalOptima Health’s mission is to serve member health with excellence and dignity, respecting the value and needs of each person. CalOptima Health serves more than 919,000 members with a network of 11,400 primary care doctors and specialists and 39 acute and rehab hospitals. Visit [www.caloptima.org](http://www.caloptima.org).

### **About Chapman University**

Founded in 1861, Chapman University is a nationally ranked private university in Orange, California, about 30 miles south of Los Angeles. Chapman serves nearly 10,000 undergraduate and graduate students, with a 12:1 student-to-faculty ratio. Students can choose from over 100 areas of study within 11 colleges for a personalized education. Chapman is categorized by the Carnegie Classification as an R2 “high research activity” institution. Students at Chapman learn directly from distinguished world-class faculty including Nobel Prize winners, MacArthur fellows, published authors and Academy Award winners. The campus has produced a Rhodes Scholar, been named a top producer of Fulbright Scholars and hosts a chapter of Phi Beta Kappa, the nation’s oldest and most prestigious honor society. Chapman also includes the Harry and Diane Rinker Health Science Campus in Irvine. The university features the No. 4 film school and No. 66 business school in the U.S. Learn more about Chapman University at [www.chapman.edu](http://www.chapman.edu).