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## California Behavioral Health Association Launches Behavioral Health Innovation Institute to Advance Youth Wellbeing Through Technology and Community Collaboration

**New *Tech to EmPOWER* Campaign, Supported by Google, Will Equip Youth, Caregivers, and Communities Across California to Foster Healthy Technology Use**

**Sacramento, Calif. — May 6, 2026** — The [California Behavioral Health Association \(CBHA\)](#) today announced the launch of the [Behavioral Health Innovation Institute \(BHII\)](#), a new organization dedicated to advancing innovative, equitable, and community-driven approaches to behavioral health and wellbeing in California.

The Institute’s first major initiative, the ***Tech to EmPOWER\** Campaign**, is being launched with funding from Google’s philanthropic arm [Google.org](#) and will engage youth, caregivers, educators, and community partners across California in reimagining how technology can be used to strengthen mental health, connection, resilience, and overall wellbeing.

The campaign is designed to move beyond fear-based conversations about technology and instead empower young people to become intentional, informed leaders in shaping their digital lives. Through youth leadership development, educational resources, peer engagement, caregiver support, and community partnerships, ***Tech to EmPOWER*** will reach thousands of Californians with tools and strategies to promote healthy relationships with technology.

“Young people deserve more than narratives that frame them as passive consumers of technology,” said Le Ondra Clark Harvey, psychologist, Executive Director of BHII and CEO of CBHA. “Through the [Behavioral Health Innovation Institute](#) and the ***Tech to EmPOWER*** campaign, we are creating a movement that recognizes youth as innovators, advocates, and leaders in shaping a healthier digital future. This initiative is about equipping communities with the tools to harness technology in ways that foster connection, purpose, emotional wellbeing, and empowerment rather than harm.”

The BHII will serve as a hub for emerging solutions at the intersection of behavioral health, technology, equity, workforce development, and system transformation. BHII will convene



leaders across sectors to identify innovative and scalable approaches that improve outcomes for behavioral health providers and clients throughout California.

The *Tech to EmPOWER* campaign will include:

- Youth leadership and ambassador opportunities
- Community and school-based engagement initiatives
- Resources for caregivers and families
- Partnerships with community based organizations
- Thought leadership and convenings focused on youth wellbeing and responsible technology use
- Tools that help communities promote *mindful, balanced, and healthy* digital engagement

“We are proud to support CBHA’s launch of the Behavioral Health Innovation Institute and the Tech to EmPOWER campaign as part of our ongoing commitment to promote youth digital wellbeing,” said Dr. Megan Jones Bell, Senior Director of Clinical at Google. “By anchoring this initiative in clinical expertise and community leadership, we can provide families across California with the evidence-based tools they need to have safe, healthy, and productive relationships with technology. Investing in these proactive frameworks has the power to positively impact thousands of lives and shape a future where technology actively supports mental health and human connection.”

California continues to face growing youth behavioral health challenges, including increased rates of anxiety, depression, isolation, and stress among young people. BHII and *Tech to EmPOWER* aim to address these challenges through proactive, community-centered approaches that elevate youth voice, strengthen protective factors, and foster healthier relationships with technology and social connection.

Additional details about the *Tech to EmPOWER* campaign, including statewide partnerships and launch events, will be announced in the coming months.

*\*Promoting Online Wellness & Emotional Resilience*

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