



State of California—Health and Human Services Agency  
Department of Health Care Services



GAVIN NEWSOM  
GOVERNOR

DATE: December 16, 2022

Behavioral Health Information Notice No: 22-061

TO: California Alliance of Child and Family Services  
California Association for Alcohol/Drug Educators  
California Association of Alcohol & Drug Program Executives, Inc.  
California Association of DUI Treatment Programs  
California Association of Social Rehabilitation Agencies  
California Consortium of Addiction Programs and Professionals  
California Council of Community Behavioral Health Agencies  
California Hospital Association  
California Opioid Maintenance Providers  
California State Association of Counties  
Coalition of Alcohol and Drug Associations  
County Behavioral Health Directors  
County Behavioral Health Directors Association of California  
County Drug & Alcohol Administrators

SUBJECT: Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialist Areas of Specialization

PURPOSE: To provide guidance regarding the process for Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialist Certification Programs to add supplemental areas of specialization.

REFERENCE: [Behavioral Health Information Notice 21-041](#); [Welfare and Institutions Code, Division 9, Part 3, Article 1.4, Chapter 7; Welfare and Institutions Code § 14045.21](#)

**BACKGROUND:**

With the Department of Health Care Services' (DHCS) approval, counties, or an agency representing a county, may develop a Peer Support Specialist Certification Program in accordance with statute and any standards established by the Department of Health Care Services (DHCS). (Welfare and Institutions Code § 14045.14.) That county, or an agency representing that county, (hereafter referred to as a Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialist Certification Program) shall oversee and enforce the certification requirements developed.

Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialist Certification Programs must have curriculum and core competencies available as optional coursework (hereafter referred to as area(s) of specialization) for Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialists. Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialist

December 16, 2022

Certification Programs must have the Parent, Caregiver, and Family Member Peers area of specialization available at Program launch (including curriculum and core competencies), and three additional areas of specialization by July 1, 2023: 1) Forensic (Justice Involved); 2) Homelessness; and 3) Crisis Services, subject to approval by DHCS.<sup>1</sup>

Any supplemental areas of specialization must be approved by DHCS. This BHIN outlines the process a Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialist Certification Program must follow to add areas of specialization.

**POLICY:**

Starting on December 16, 2022, if a Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialist Certification Program intends to add supplemental areas of specialization at their own discretion, the Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialist Certification Program must submit the curriculum and core competencies for the area of specialization to DHCS by May 1 prior to the start of the State Fiscal Year (SFY) (July 1 – June 30) in which the area of specialization will start. Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialist Certification Programs are the only entities that can submit curriculum and core competencies for a supplemental area of specialization. This process will occur every SFY for any new areas of specialization. A Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialist Certification Program may submit the proposed curriculum to [peers@dhcs.ca.gov](mailto:peers@dhcs.ca.gov).

If an approved area of specialization curriculum or core competencies undergo any changes after DHCS approval, the Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialist Certification Program must submit the updated curriculum and/or core competencies for DHCS review by May 1 prior to the start of the SFY, in which the area of specialization will take place. This process will occur every SFY for any areas of specialization that undergo changes after DHCS approval. The Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialist Certification Program may submit the new curriculum and/or core competencies to [peers@dhcs.ca.gov](mailto:peers@dhcs.ca.gov). The email must contain an explanation of which items were removed from, added to, or altered from the original curriculum and/or core competencies.

Questions regarding Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialist Certification Programs may be submitted via email to [peers@dhcs.ca.gov](mailto:peers@dhcs.ca.gov).

Sincerely,

Original signed by

Ivan Bhardwaj, Acting Chief  
Medi-Cal Behavioral Health Division

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<sup>1</sup> See [BHIN 21-041](#) for required core competencies of training curriculum.