



MICHELLE BAASS
DIRECTOR

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



GAVIN NEWSOM
GOVERNOR

DATE: December 21, 2022

Behavioral Health Information Notice No: 22-066

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: Extended Deadlines for Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialist
Grandparenting and Implementation of Medi-Cal Peer Support
Specialist Certification Program Curriculum

PURPOSE: To extend the deadline to apply for Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialist
certification via grandparenting and extend the deadline for
implementation of the Crisis Services, Forensic (Justice Involved), and
Homelessness areas of specialization.

REFERENCE: [Behavioral Health Information Notice 21-041](#), Welfare and Institutions
Code [§ 14045.21](#)

BACKGROUND:

On July 22, 2021, DHCS issued [BHIN 21-041](#), outlining requirements for Medi-Cal Peer Support Services Certification Program implementation, and directed entities implementing Medi-Cal Peer Support Certification Programs to adhere to the standards outlined in [BHIN 21-041](#), Enclosure 1, including requirements listed in Enclosure 1,

Section 4, Areas of Specialization, and Enclosure 1, Section 5, Grandparenting and Out of State Reciprocity.¹

Within Section 4, Areas of Specialization, DHCS informed Medi-Cal Peer Support Services Certification Programs that the “Crisis Services,” “Forensic (Justice Involved),” and “Homelessness” areas of specialization will be implemented by January 1, 2023. Areas of specialization are described as extracurricular areas of focus or specialty for peers that are outside of the core peers curriculum.

Additionally, the requirements in Section 5, Grandparenting and Out of State Reciprocity, stated that Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialists (“Peers”) employed as a peer as of January 1, 2022 and seeking certification through the grandparenting process, must complete or begin the grandparenting process by December 31, 2022. The grandparenting process is defined as having either 1 year of paid or unpaid work experience (1550 hours) as a peer specialist and 20 hours of continuing education (CEs) or 1550 hours in 3 years, with 500 hours completed within the last 12 months working as a peer specialist and 20 hours of CEs. Out of state reciprocity applies to individuals who have met the above requirements through work as peers out of state and who seek to be certified under the DHCS standards.

POLICY:

Medi-Cal Peer Support Services Certification Programs Areas of Specialization

The deadline for Medi-Cal Peer Support Certification Programs to implement the following three areas of specialization is extended to July 1, 2023:

- Crisis Services
- Forensic (Justice Involved)
- Homelessness

Grandparenting

The deadline for Peers employed as a Peer as of January 1, 2022, to seek certification through the grandparenting process, is extended to June 30, 2023. Peers employed as a peer as of June 30, 2023 must complete or begin the process by or on June 30, 2023 to be eligible for grandparenting. After this date, Peers seeking certification under a Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialist Certification Program must complete the initial certification process.

¹ [Behavioral Health Information Notice 21-041, Enclosure 1](#)

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This BHIN supersedes any conflicting requirements set forth in any other BHIN or guidance in existence as of the date of publishing this BHIN. To the extent that there is conflict between the MHP contract, DMC contract, or the DMC-ODS Intergovernmental Agreement terms and this BHIN, the policy contained within the BHIN supersedes the contract terms. Questions regarding the Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialist Certification Program and requirements can be submitted to peers@dhcs.ca.gov.

Sincerely,

Original signed by

Ivan Bhardwaj, Acting Chief
Medi-Cal Behavioral Health Division