



DATE: March 28, 2023

Behavioral Health Information Notice No: 23-012

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 Certification Fee Schedule Requirements and DHCS Approval Process

PURPOSE: To outline the Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialist Fee Schedule Requirements and Approval Process.

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).ⁱ That county, or an agency representing that county (hereafter referred to as a Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialist Certification Program), is authorized to establish a certification fee schedule for the purpose of supporting the activities associated with the ongoing administration of the Peer Support Specialist Certification Program, including verifying that an individual has met the requirements to be certified as a Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialist. Additionally, DHCS shall review and either approve or disapprove the Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialist Certification Program fee schedule.ⁱⁱ

POLICY:

All Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialist Certification Programs must develop and submit a certification fee schedule that outlines the fees pertaining to the verification that an individual has met the requirements to be certified as a Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialist.ⁱⁱⁱ Fees shall be non-duplicative of other funding received by the certifying entity and shall be justified through both narrative and a spreadsheet. The activities and costs incorporated into the fee schedule may include, but are not limited to:

- Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialist certification application
 - Costs can include, but are not limited to, application development, application processing, ongoing maintenance, and updates to tools and policies.
- Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialist certification exam
 - Costs can include, but are not limited to, proctoring exam (if applicable), scoring exam, and translation costs.
- Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialist certification exam retake
 - Costs can include, but are not limited to, proctoring exam (if applicable), scoring exam, and translation costs.
- Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialist certification renewal and reinstatement
 - Costs can include, but are not limited to, processing time for renewals and reinstatement.
- Additional certification activities and related costs submitted as part of the fee schedule will be reviewed and approved by DHCS to determine if they are directly related to the verification that an individual has met the requirements to be certified as a Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialist.

Limitations

- Charges shall be no greater than necessary to cover reasonable costs^{iv}; rounding to the nearest increment of \$5.00 is acceptable to account for uncertainty in costs.
- Fees for peer trainings to enable individuals to meet Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialist certification requirements will not be reviewed and either approved or disapproved by DHCS as they are not directly related to the verification that an individual meets all the requirements to provide peer support services. These fees are outside of DHCS' statutory authority.

DHCS REVIEW:

Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialist Certification Programs shall submit a proposed fee schedule to DHCS via peers@DHCS.ca.gov. DHCS will review the breakdown of costs and cost justification, and issue an initial response in the form of clarifying questions or a decision, within 90 calendar days of receipt. Review will be based on the policy

outlined in this BHIN. If DHCS issues clarifying questions, a final approval or disapproval decision may take up to 120 calendar days from initial date of receipt of the proposed fee schedule, assuming prompt responses from the Certification Program.

Following the first approval, proposed fee schedules shall be resubmitted every 2 years from the date of initial submission but no later than May 1st, to receive approval for the coming fiscal year. If a Certification Program wishes to revise the fee schedule within the two-year revision and resubmission cycle, the program shall submit an email request to DHCS at peers@dhcs.ca.gov. DHCS will communicate individually with the program to determine next steps.

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, Chief
Medi-Cal Behavioral Health–Policy Division

ⁱ CA Welf & Inst Code §14045.14

ⁱⁱ CA Welf & Inst Code §14045.18

ⁱⁱⁱ CA Welf & Inst Code § 14045.12 defines “certification” as “activities related to the verification that an individual has met all of the requirements under this article and that the individual may provide peer support specialist services pursuant to this article.”

^{iv} 2 CFR § 200.404: Outlines basic considerations when assessing whether costs are reasonable.