



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



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DIRECTOR

GAVIN NEWSOM
GOVERNOR

DATE: April 21, 2022

Behavioral Health Information Notice No: 22-018

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 Supervisor training requirements for counties

PURPOSE: To provide guidance for counties on the county requirements for peer support supervisory trainings

REFERENCE: [Welfare and Institutions Code \(W&I\) section 14045.13](#); [BHIN 21-041](#)

BACKGROUND:

Senate Bill (SB) 803, chaptered in 2020, authorized the California Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) to seek federal approvals to add peer support specialists as a Medi-Cal provider type and peer support services as a distinct service type in counties opting to participate in this program. SB 803 also directs DHCS to develop state standards for Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialist Certification Programs that may be implemented by counties or county-contracted entities opting to provide these programs. This certification is required for Medi-Cal reimbursement of Peer Support Services. Certification is not required for peer programs operating under other funding sources.

DHCS recognizes the efficacy of using certified peer support specialists as supervisors of other peers. DHCS highly encourages the employment of peers as peer supervisors. However, due to the variability of counties and availability of the peer workforce, DHCS

authorizes other behavioral health professionals to serve as Peer Support Specialist Supervisors, providing they have completed a DHCS-approved peer support supervisory training curriculum and meet at least one of the below qualifications:

- Have a Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialist Certification Program certification and two years of experience working in the behavioral health system;

OR

- Have worked as a non-peer behavioral health professional (including registered and certified SUD counselors) in the behavioral health system for a minimum of two years; OR
- Have a high school diploma or GED and four years of behavioral health direct service experience that may include peer support services.

POLICY:

Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialist Supervisors must take a DHCS-approved peer support supervisory training within 60 days of beginning to supervise Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialists. Supervisors must take the DHCS-approved peer support supervisory training at least once, with ongoing training incorporated into a county's regular continuing education requirements. However, counties may develop more frequent or more robust training requirements.

Counties are responsible for designating a peer supervisor curriculum for peer supervisors in their county. When designating this curriculum, counties may:

- 1) Use their current curriculum to train peer support supervisors, subject to DHCS approval; or
- 2) Develop a new curriculum to train peer support supervisors, subject to DHCS approval; or
- 3) Utilize a DHCS-approved curriculum available to counties via the California Mental Health Services Authority (CalMHSA).

A county that does not use the CalMHSA curriculum must submit the contents of their curriculum to DHCS for review and approval. Once approved, the county must resubmit the curriculum for review if it undergoes any significant changes to the content. Starting in May 2022, if a county intends to use its own peer supervisory training curriculum, the county must submit the curriculum to DHCS by May 1 prior to the start of the Fiscal Year in which the training program will start. A county may submit the curriculum to peers@dhcs.ca.gov. Counties who plan to utilize the CalMHSA curriculum do not need to contact DHCS.

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If an approved county curriculum undergoes significant changes after DHCS approval, the county must submit the new curriculum for DHCS review by May 1 prior to the start of the Fiscal Year in which the training program will take place. A county may submit the new curriculum to peers@dhcs.ca.gov. The email must contain an explanation of which items were removed from, added to, or altered from the original curriculum.

Questions regarding the Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialist Certification Program may be submitted via email to peers@dhcs.ca.gov.

Sincerely,

Original signed by

Marlies Perez, Chief
Community Services Division