

DATE:

Behavioral Health Information Notice No: 23-0XX
Supersedes BHIN No(s): BHIN [21-041](#); BHIN [22-006](#)
BHIN [22-018](#); BHIN [22-026](#); BHIN [22-061](#); BHIN [22-062](#)
BHIN [22-067](#); BHIN [23-003](#); BHIN [23-010](#); BHIN [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 Program
California Association of Mental Health Peer Run Organizations
California Association of Social Rehabilitation Agencies
California Consortium of Addiction Programs and Professional
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 Services, Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialists,
and Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialists Certification Program
Requirements

PURPOSE: To provide the requirements and standards for implementing the Medi-Cal Peer Support Services benefit, Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialist provider type, and Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialist certification programs.

REFERENCE: Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services State Medicaid Directors Letter #07-011; Welfare and Institutions Code, Division 9, Part 3, Chapter 7, Article 1.4; California State Plan Amendment (SPA) # 21-0051.

Table of Contents

BACKGROUND	X
POLICY	X
Medi-Cal Peer Support Services.....	X
Opting in to Provide Medi-Cal Peer Support Services.....	X
Early Periodic Screening, Diagnostic and Treatment or (EPSDT) Mandate.....	X
Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialists	X
Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialist Practice Guidelines.....	X
Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialist Supervisor Requirements	X
Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialist Certification Program Standards	X
1. Policies and Procedures for Initial Certification of a Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialist.....	X
2. Policies and Procedures for Submission of an Annual Reporting Process	
3. Certification Program Plan Materials Submission	
4. Grandparenting (by June 30, 2023) and Out-of-State Reciprocity Process.....	X
5. County Reciprocity	X
6. Areas of Specialization Curricula and Trainings	X
7. Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialist Supervisor Curriculum and Training	X
8. Fee schedule.....	X
9. Policies and Procedures for Biennial Renewal	X
10. Policies and Procedures for Lapsed Certification.....	X
11. Policies and Procedures for Complaints and Corrective Actions Against Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialists.....	X
12. Complaints and Investigations of Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialist Certification Programs.....	X
Short Doyle Medi-Cal (SD/MC) Claiming for Medi-Cal Peer Support Services	X

BACKGROUND:

This Behavioral Health Information Notice (BHIN) consolidates Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) guidance related to the implementation of the Medi-Cal Peer Support Services benefit, the Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialist provider type, and the Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialist certification program requirements.

DHCS recognizes that peers have long played a role in the prevention, early intervention, treatment, and recovery process for individuals living with mental health conditions and substance use disorders. As individuals with either lived experience, or as the parents, caregivers, and family members of individuals living with mental health conditions and/or substance use disorders, peer support workers understand and

positively impact the experiences of the individuals they serve and can help individuals access the most effective set of services for their individual-recovery needs.

Senate Bill (SB) 803, chaptered in 2020, authorized DHCS to seek federal approvals to add Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialists as a Medi-Cal provider type and Medi-Cal Peer Support Services as a distinct service type in counties opting to participate in this program. DHCS received federal approvals of its CalAIM Section 1115 Demonstration Waiver and State Plan Amendment in December 2021.¹

SB 803 also directed DHCS to develop state standards for Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialist certification programs that may be implemented by counties that opt in to provide Medi-Cal Peer Support Services or by county-contracted certification entities. Certification of Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialists is required for Medi-Cal reimbursement. These standards are non-binding for peer support worker programs operating through other, non-Medi-Cal funding streams but are valuable as best practices. DHCS worked with stakeholders to develop these certification standards, including behavioral health and peer-led associations, county partners, representatives from non-profit organizations, representatives from peer-run organizations, existing peer support workers, behavioral health consumers, and other interested individuals.

This BHIN provides details on the Medi-Cal Peer Support Services benefit, the Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialist provider type, and state standards for Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialist certification programs, including the steps counties that opt in shall take to implement these programs.

POLICY:

Medi-Cal Peer Support Services

Medi-Cal Peer Support Services are defined as culturally competent individual and group services that promote recovery, resiliency, engagement, socialization, self-sufficiency, self-advocacy, development of natural supports, and identification of strengths through structured activities such as group and individual coaching to set recovery goals and identify steps to reach the goals. Services aim to prevent relapse, empower Medi-Cal beneficiaries through strength-based coaching, support linkages to community resources, and educate beneficiaries and their families about their conditions and the process of recovery. Medi-Cal Peer Support Services may be provided with the beneficiary or significant support person(s) and may be provided in a clinical or non-clinical setting.

¹ See [California State Plan Amendments \(SPAs\) #: 21-0051](#), [20-0006-A](#), and [21-0058](#), and the [CalAIM Section 1115 demonstration](#) waiver and [1915\(b\) waiver](#).

Medi-Cal Peer Support Services can include contact with family members or other collaterals (family members or other people supporting the member), if the purpose of the collateral's participation is to focus on the treatment needs of the beneficiary by supporting the achievement of the beneficiary's goals. There may be times when, based on clinical judgment, the beneficiary is not present during the delivery of the service, but remains the focus of the service. Medi-Cal Peer Support Services are based on an approved plan of care that includes specific individualized goals.²

Medi-Cal Peer Support Services are available to parents/legal guardians of beneficiaries 17 years of age and younger when the service is directed exclusively toward the benefit of the beneficiary.³ Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialists providing services to the parents/legal guardians of a beneficiary 17 years of age and younger shall have a "Parent, Caregiver, and Family Member" Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialist certification specialization and "should be self-identified consumers who are in recovery from mental illness and/or substance use disorders;" or a parent of a child with a similar mental illness and/or substance use disorder, or an adult with an ongoing and/or personal experience with a family member with a similar mental illness and/or substance use disorder.⁴

Medi-Cal Peer Support Services can be delivered as a standalone service or provided in conjunction with other Specialty Mental Health Services (SMHS), Drug Medi-Cal (DMC), or Drug Medi-Cal-Organized Delivery System (DMC-ODS) services, including inpatient and residential services, and include the following service components:

- **Educational Skill Building Groups** that provide a supportive environment in which beneficiaries and their families learn coping mechanisms and problem-solving skills in the areas of socialization, recovery, self-sufficiency, self-advocacy, development of natural supports, and maintenance of skills learned in other support services in order to help the beneficiaries achieve desired outcomes.
- **Engagement** through Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialist-led activities and coaching to encourage and support beneficiaries to participate in behavioral health treatment. Engagement may include supporting beneficiaries in their transitions between levels of care and supporting beneficiaries in developing their own recovery goals and processes.

² As stated in [CMS Medicaid Directors Letter #07-011](#).

³ As stated in [SPA 22-0024](#) and CMS' [Clarifying Guidance on Peer Support Services Policy](#).

⁴ As stated in [CMS Medicaid Directors Letter #07-011](#), and CMS' [Clarifying Guidance on Peer Support Services Policy](#).

- **Therapeutic Activity** through a structured non-clinical activity facilitated by a Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialist to promote recovery, wellness, self-advocacy, relationship enhancement, development of natural supports, self-awareness and values, and the maintenance of community living skills to support the beneficiary's treatment to attain and maintain recovery within their communities. Activities may include, but are not limited to, advocacy on behalf of the beneficiary; promotion of self-advocacy; resource navigation; and collaboration with the beneficiary and others providing care or support to the beneficiary, family members, or significant support persons.

Opting In to Provide Medi-Cal Peer Support Services

Effective May 2022, counties interested in opting in to provide Medi-Cal Peer Support Services effective July 1, 2022, were required to submit a letter to DHCS stating their request to opt in. For counties that did not choose to opt in effective July 1, 2022, DHCS will allow opt-in opportunities on an annual basis.

Counties choosing to opt in to provide Medi-Cal Peer Support Services are to submit a letter to DHCS stating their request to opt in to provide Medi-Cal Peer Support Services, and indicate the program(s) (SMHS, DMC, and/or DMC-ODS) for which they are opting in. The opt-in letter shall be signed by the Behavioral Health Director and emailed to CountySupport@dhcs.ca.gov no later than December 31 prior to the following year implementation effective date of July 1 (e.g. for a July 1, 2024 implementation effective date, the counties would need to submit the opt-in letter by December 31, 2023).

Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnostic and Treatment Obligations

In accordance with the Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnostic and Treatment (EPSDT) mandate under Section 1905(r) of the Social Security Act, all counties, irrespective of their choice to opt into providing Medi-Cal Peer Support Services as a Medi-Cal service, shall ensure that all beneficiaries under age 21 receive medically necessary Medi-Cal Peer Support Services to correct or ameliorate health conditions that are coverable under Section 1905(a) of the Social Security Act. Nothing in this BHIN limits or modifies the scope of the EPSDT mandate. All counties are responsible for the provision of medically necessary Medi-Cal Peer Support Services pursuant to the EPSDT mandate. Counties should refer to [BHIN 21-073](#) regarding medical necessity criteria for SMHS and [BHINs 21-071](#) and [22-003](#) regarding Medi-Cal substance use disorder treatment services for beneficiaries under age 21 for further guidance on compliance with EPSDT requirements.

Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialists

To be reimbursable under Medi-Cal, Medi-Cal Peer Support Services shall be provided by certified Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialists. A Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialist is defined as an individual with a current state-approved certification as a Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialist from a county, or an agency representing the county, who also meets all other applicable California state requirements, including ongoing continuing education requirements.

Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialists shall meet the following qualifications:

1. Be at least 18 years of age;
2. Possess a high school diploma or equivalent degree;
3. Be self-identified as having experience with the process of recovery from mental illness or substance use disorder, either as a consumer of these services or as the parent, caregiver or family member of a consumer;
4. Be willing to share their experience;
5. Have a strong dedication to recovery;⁵
6. Agree, in writing, to adhere to a code of ethics;
7. Successfully complete the curriculum and training requirements for a Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialist; and
8. Pass a Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialist certification examination provided by a DHCS-approved certification program.

Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialists shall provide services under the direction of a Behavioral Health Professional. A Behavioral Health Professional shall be licensed, waived, or registered in accordance with applicable State of California licensure requirements and listed in the California Medicaid State Plan as a qualified provider of SMHS, DMC, or DMC-ODS.

Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialists shall be supervised by a Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialist Supervisor who meets applicable State of California requirements, as long as the services are under the direction of a Behavioral Health Professional.

Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialist Supervisor Requirements

DHCS acknowledges the efficacy and evidence-based practice of experienced peer support workers supervising other peer support workers and encourages the employment of Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialists as Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialist

⁵ Per W&I Code § [14045.12](#) (i), Recovery is defined as a process of change through which an individual improves their health and wellness, lives a self-directed life, and strives to reach their full potential. This process of change recognizes cultural diversity and inclusion and honors the different routes to resilience and recovery based on the individual and their cultural community.

supervisors. However, due to the variability of counties and availability of the peer workforce, other Behavioral Health Professionals (listed below) may also be designated by a county, or an agency representing the county, as Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialist supervisors, following completion of a DHCS-approved Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialist supervisor training provided by the county or the county's selected training entity.

Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialist Supervisors shall meet at least one of the below qualifications:

- Have a Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialist certification; have two years of experience working in the behavioral health system; and have completed a DHCS-approved peer support supervisory training curriculum; OR
- Be a non-Peer Support Specialist Behavioral Health Professional (including registered & certified substance use disorder counselors) who has worked in the behavioral health system for a minimum of two years, and has completed a DHCS approved Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialist Supervisor training curriculum; OR
- Have a high school diploma or GED, four years of behavioral health direct service experience that may include Medi-Cal Peer Support Services; and have completed a DHCS approved Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialist Supervisor training curriculum.

Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialist Supervisors shall complete a DHCS-approved Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialist Supervisor training within 60 days of beginning to supervise Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialists. Following completion of the training, supervisors shall complete ongoing training through the relevant county's regular continuing education requirements. Counties may also develop more frequent or more robust supervisor training requirements.

Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialist Practice Guidelines

Counties shall use the practice guidelines developed by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) in *What are Peer Recovery Support Services* to implement practice standards for Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialists.⁶

⁶ SAMHSA: [What Are Peer Recovery Support Services?](#)

Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialist Certification Program Standards

A “certification program” is a county, or agency representing the county, that certifies peer support workers as Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialists for a county that opted in to cover Peer Support Specialist Services. Each county shall only designate one certification program to certify their Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialists, across all relevant Medi-Cal behavioral health delivery systems, which include Mental Health Plans, DMC programs, or DMC-ODS Plans.

Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialist certification programs shall adhere to the standards developed by DHCS, per SB 803, and set forth in this BHIN. Counties, or the agency selected by a county to represent them as the certification program, shall submit a certification program plan with supporting documents to DHCS in accordance with this BHIN. Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialist certification program plans shall be emailed to peers@dhcs.ca.gov by May 1 prior to the start of the State Fiscal Year (SFY) (July 1 – June 30) of planned implementation (e.g. for a July 1, 2024 implementation, the certification program would need to be submitted by May 1, 2024).

Counties can elect to change their certification program on an annual basis by submitting a new certification program plan by May 1 prior to the start of the SFY of planned implementation. Counties shall not change certification programs during the SFY. Counties with no changes in a certification program do not need to submit a new certification program plan to DHCS annually.

Counties, or an agency representing a county, that are approved by DHCS to implement a Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialist certification program are subject to periodic reviews conducted by DHCS to ensure adherence to all federal and state requirements and shall submit Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialist program reports to DHCS annually and upon DHCS’ request.

Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialist certification programs are responsible for adhering to the state standards. The program plan materials that shall be submitted by the certification program to DHCS are listed below, additional related attachments are in Enclosures 1 - 3.

1. Policies and Procedures for Initial Certification of a Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialist, including training and curriculum.
2. Policies and Procedures for Submission of an Annual Reporting Process
3. Certification Program Plan Materials Submission
4. Grandparenting and Out-of-State Reciprocity Process
5. County Reciprocity

6. Areas of Specialization Curricula and Trainings
7. Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialist Supervisor Curriculum and Training
8. Fee Schedule
9. Process for Biennial Renewal
10. Policies and Procedures for Lapsed Certification
11. Policies and Procedures for Complaints and Corrective Actions Against Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialists
12. Complaints and Investigations of Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialist Certification Programs.

1. Policies and Procedures for Initial Certification of a Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialist

For an initial certification of a Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialist, a Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialist certification program shall ensure that candidates:

- A. Agree to adhere to the most recent version of the Code of Ethics for Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialists.
 - The Code of Ethics for Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialists is contained in Enclosure 3 and posted on the DHCS Peers webpage. DHCS may update the Code of Ethics as needed. DHCS shall alert all approved certification programs of updates. A certification program shall inform all Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialists certified by the certification program of the updates in writing. Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialists shall review and agree to adhere to any updates.
- B. Complete the training curriculum that consists of 80 hours of training, including training on didactic learning.
 - The training curriculum shall incorporate the following core competencies:
 - The concepts of hope, recovery, and wellness;
 - The role of advocacy;
 - The role of consumers and family members;
 - Psychiatric rehabilitation skills and service delivery, and addiction recovery principles, including defined practices;
 - Cultural and structural competence trainings;⁷
 - Trauma-informed care;
 - Group facilitation skills;

⁷ Per [W&I Code §14045.12 \(e\)](#). “cultural competence” means a set of congruent behaviors, attitudes, and policies that come together in a system or agency that enables that system or agency to work effectively in cross-cultural situations. A culturally competent system of care acknowledges and incorporates, at all levels, the importance of language and culture, intersecting identities, assessment of cross-cultural relations, knowledge and acceptance of dynamics of cultural differences, expansion of cultural knowledge, and adaptation of services to meet culturally unique needs to provide services in a culturally competent manner.

- Self-awareness and self-care;
- Co-occurring disorders of mental health and substance use;
- Conflict resolution;
- Professional boundaries and ethics;
- Preparation for employment opportunities, including study and test-taking skills, application and résumé preparation, interviewing, and other potential requirements for employment;
- Safety and crisis planning;
- Navigation of, referral to, and education on other services;
- Documentation skills and standards;
- Confidentiality; and
- Digital literacy.

Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialist Training Entities and Curriculum

Certification programs may contract with training entities to provide Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialist training. A “training entity” is an organization that provides the required training curriculum established under the core competencies listed above. A certification program shall develop a process, approved by DHCS, as part of its certification program plan, to evaluate all training entities that apply to provide the required training curriculum. The evaluation shall determine whether the proposed training curriculum meets the core competencies. The process shall also include an annual evaluation by the certification program of all approved training entities to ensure the training curriculum continues to meet the core competencies. Additionally, a certification program’s process shall allow new training entities to apply on an annual basis.

C. Pass the initial certification exam.

Upon a candidate’s completion of the training from an approved training entity, a Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialist certification program shall administer an examination that has been approved by DHCS. The Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialist certification program shall provide reasonable accommodations to the candidate as requested, including verbal testing and testing in threshold languages.

2. Policies and Procedures for Submission of an Annual Reporting Process

In accordance with Welfare & Institutions Code (W&I) Sections 14045.14, Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialist certification programs shall submit annual program reports to DHCS via peers@dhcs.ca.gov by December 31. Reports must reflect information on certifications occurring within the previous SFY (July 1 – June 30). A certification program must make past reports publicly available, either online or via another public

forum. DHCS may add additional reporting requirements in subsequent years. A full description of required annual reporting information is listed in Enclosure 2.

3. Certification Program Plan Materials Submission

All program plan materials, including certification plans, updated program materials, or changes to a county's certification program selection shall be submitted by email at peers@dhcs.ca.gov by May 1 prior to the start of the SFY in which implementation of or proposed changes to the certification program will take place. As applicable, the submission shall contain the name of the new certification program selected and/or an explanation of which certification program plan materials were removed, added to, or altered.

4. Grandparenting (by June 30, 2023) and Out-of-State Reciprocity Process

Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialist certification programs shall offer eligible peer support workers Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialist certification through the grandparenting or out-of-state reciprocity process if the individual meets the following criteria:

- 1500 hours in three years or fewer, with 500 hours completed within the last 12 months as a peer support worker **and** 20 hours of continuing education units (CEUs), including law and ethics. CEUs can be in relevant professional competencies obtained via relevant in-state, out-of-state, or national educational forums.

AND has:

- Documented completion of at least one peer training;
- Passed the Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialist certification program exam;
- Agreed to adhere to the Code of Ethics for Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialists in California; **and**
- Provided three Letters of Recommendation as outlined:
 - One from a supervisor
 - One from a colleague/professional
 - One self-recommendation describing their current role and responsibilities as a peer support worker

For individuals seeking certification through the grandparenting process by June 30, 2023:

Individuals must have been employed as a peer support worker on January 1, 2022, and on the date, they submitted their application, between January 1, 2022, and June

30, 2023. The deadline for individuals to seek certification through the grandparenting process was June 30, 2023.

For individuals seeking certification through out-of-state reciprocity:

There is no employment deadline or sunset date for peer support workers with out-of-state certification to apply for reciprocity.

As with the initial certification, the Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialist certification program shall provide reasonable accommodations to the candidate as requested, including verbal testing and testing in threshold languages.

5. County Reciprocity

Once a Peer Support Specialist is certified through a DHCS-approved Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialist certification program, they shall be recognized as certified Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialists in all counties throughout California. However, only counties electing to participate in the Medi-Cal Peer Support Services benefit can be federally reimbursed for behavioral health Peer Support Services provided by Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialists to Medi-Cal beneficiaries.

6. Areas of Specialization Curricula and Trainings

Certification programs shall develop curricula and trainings for areas of specialization that DHCS determines certification programs are required to offer. All curricula and trainings shall be reviewed by DHCS.

Currently, DHCS requires certification programs to implement curriculum for the following areas of specialization:

- Parent, Caregiver, and Family Member Peers (required as of July 1, 2022);
- Crisis Services (required as of July 1, 2023);
- Forensic (Justice Involved) (required as of July 1, 2023); and
- Homelessness (required as of July 1, 2023).

DHCS may add new, required areas of specialization at any time.

Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialist certification programs can also propose a new area of specialization by submitting a draft curriculum and core competencies for the area of specialization to peers@dhcs.ca.gov by May 1 prior to the beginning of the SFY in which the curriculum would begin. Additional areas of specialization proposed by certification programs are subject to DHCS' approval. This process will occur every SFY for any new areas of specialization. Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialist certification

programs are the only entities that can submit curriculum and core competencies for a supplemental area of specialization.

If an approved area of specialization curriculum or core competencies undergo any changes after DHCS review, 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 following DHCS review.

The Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialist Certification Program may submit the new curriculum and/or core competencies 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 and/or core competencies.

7. Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialist Supervisor Curriculum and Training

Counties are responsible for selecting a Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialist supervisor curriculum for their county. When selecting 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 an approved certification program.

A county that does not use a DHCS-approved Peer Support Specialist Supervisor training curriculum through a DHCS-approved certification program shall submit the contents of their curriculum to DHCS for review and approval by May 1 prior to the start of the SFY in which the training program will start. A county may submit the curriculum to peers@dhcs.ca.gov. Once approved, the county shall resubmit the curriculum for review if it undergoes any significant changes to the content by May 1 prior to the start of the SFY in which the revised training program will start. The submission shall contain an explanation of which items were removed from, added to, or altered from the original curriculum.

Counties that plan to use an approved certification program's curriculum do not need to contact DHCS.

8. *Fee Schedule*

A Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialist certification program shall develop and submit a certification fee schedule to DHCS 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.⁸ Fees shall be non-duplicative of other funding received by the certifying program 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, reinstatement, and late fees.
 - 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.

Charges shall be no greater than necessary to cover reasonable costs; rounding to the nearest increment of \$5.00 is acceptable to account for uncertainty in costs.⁹

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.

⁸W&I Section 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."

⁹ 2 CFR § 200.404: Outlines basic considerations when assessing whether costs are reasonable.

Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialist certification programs shall submit a proposed fee schedule to DHCS as part of its complete program plan. 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 two years from the date of initial submission to receive approval for the coming SFY. 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.

9. Policies and Procedures for Biennial Renewal

A Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialist certification program shall provide a process for biennial certification renewal for certified Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialists. This process shall include ensuring continuing education trainings are accessible to Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialists and that renewal candidates perform 20 hours of continuing education every two years. The continuing education shall include updates on applicable laws and evidence-based best practices. A Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialist certification program shall also ensure that certified Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialists reaffirm in writing their adherence to the most recent version of the Code of Ethics for Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialists in California.

10. Policies and Procedures for Lapsed Certification

Certification is considered lapsed immediately following the date of expiration. If a Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialist's certification lapses but they are within one year from the date that their initial certification expired, certification may be reinstated if the candidate pays the certification fee and any late fee imposed by the certification program and affirms, in writing, to adhere to the most recent version of the Code of Ethics for Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialists in California. If a Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialist's certification lapses and the candidate is between one to four years from the date that their initial certification expired, the Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialist certification program shall allow renewal of certification if the candidate passes a state-approved Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialist certification program examination, pays the certification fee and any late fee imposed by the certification program, and affirms, in writing, to adhere to the most recent version of the Code of Ethics for Medi-Cal Peer

Support Specialists in California. The requirement of 20 hours of continuing education every two years applies to lapsed certifications as well. If a Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialist's certification lapses and the candidate is beyond four years from the date their certification elapsed, the candidate must reapply through the initial certification process.

11. Policies and Procedures for Complaints and Corrective Actions Against Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialists

A Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialist certification program shall also submit for DHCS approval a process for reviewing complaints and corrective actions against Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialists, including the suspension and revocation of certification, as well as the appeals process. DHCS will approve processes that include the following:

- Specifications for the Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialist certification program to investigate submitted complaints within a specified timeframe;
- A disciplinary process for substantiated allegations that requires either education hours, certification suspension, and/or revocation; and
- An appeal process.

DHCS will not conduct a review pertaining to complaints against individual Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialists nor review appeals. A Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialist certification program shall conduct reviews pertaining to complaints against individual Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialists who have been issued a certification by the same Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialist certification program.

Monitoring of the Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialist certification program(s) will be conducted through the process described in the annual reporting section of this BHIN and through any additional program implementation monitoring efforts.

12. Complaints and Investigations of Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialist Certification Programs.

DHCS will conduct a review of a Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialist certification program upon receipt of a complaint regarding the violation of an applicable law or guidance, such as W&I Sections 14045.10 – 14045.21 or the guidance in this BHIN. The complaint does not need to be filed with the certification program before it is filed with DHCS.

Complaints regarding Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialist certification programs may be submitted to DHCS at peers@dhcs.ca.gov or submitted by mail to:

Department of Health Care Services
Behavioral Health MS 2710,
P.O. Box 997413
Sacramento, CA
95899-7413.¹⁰

Complaints regarding Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialist certification programs may only be submitted by persons who have applied for Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialist certification (regardless of certification status), their designated representative, a staff member from the Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialist certification program, or a county staff member with a concern from the county that the Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialist certification program represents. Upon receiving such a complaint, DHCS will complete the following steps:

- 1) DHCS will determine whether it is the appropriate entity to investigate the complaint. DHCS has authority to investigate a complaint when a Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialist certification program allegedly violates an applicable law, or the standards set forth in this BHIN.
- 2) The DHCS investigation may include:
 - a. Reviewing the Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialist certification program's policies and procedures;
 - b. Contacting the complainant to gather any available information or documentation to support the complainant's allegations; and/or
 - c. Contacting the Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialist certification program to gather any available information or documentation regarding the complaint's allegations.
- 1) If DHCS finds that the Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialist certification program has violated applicable law or standards, DHCS will issue an investigative report outlining the findings to the Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialist certification program.
 - i. The Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialist certification program shall submit to DHCS a copy of the investigative report and a copy of a Corrective Action Plan (CAP) signed by the Medi-Cal Peer

¹⁰Complaints regarding individual Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialists shall be submitted to the Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialist certification program.

Support Specialist certification program Director or designee within 15 calendar days of receiving the investigative report. A CAP shall include the following information:

- ii. Description of corrective actions, including a timeline for implementation and/or completion of corrective actions;
- iii. Proposed and/or actual evidence of correction that will be submitted to DHCS;
- iv. Processes for monitoring the effectiveness of corrective actions over time; and
- v. Descriptions of corrective actions required of the county's contracted providers to address findings.

2) DHCS will provide notice to the complainant that the complaint was received and is being investigated.

3) DHCS will notify the Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialist certification program to confirm if the CAP is approved or denied.

- a. If the CAP is denied, the Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialist certification program will have 15 calendar days from the date the CAP is denied submitting a revised CAP. The Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialist certification program may request technical assistance from DHCS if needed.

If a revised CAP is not resubmitted within 15 calendar days from the date the initial CAP is denied, the certification program will be suspended from processing any new Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialist applicants. Applicants already undergoing certification at time of suspension may still be processed.

4) DHCS will lift a suspension due to a previously denied CAP when it approves the revised CAP as described in step 5.

5) After DHCS approves the CAP, the Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialist certification program shall submit evidence to DHCS showing that the CAP was implemented and the correction to the finding(s) was made. DHCS will evaluate the evidence and determine whether the finding(s) has been resolved. If the finding(s) has been resolved, DHCS will issue a resolution letter to the Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialist certification program. If the Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialist certification program does not submit evidence of correction, DHCS may suspend the Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialist certification program from engaging in certifying activities.

If DHCS suspends a Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialist certification program, the certification program may request an appeal by sending an email to peers@dhcs.ca.gov. Request for appeals shall be sent and postmarked within seven calendar days from the date of the notification of the suspension.

If DHCS determines that the complaint is unfounded, DHCS shall notify the certification program in writing.

Short Doyle Medi-Cal Claiming for Medi-Cal Peer Support Services

Medi-Cal Peer Support Services shall be claimed through the SD/MC claiming system for SMHS, DMC, and DMC-ODS as an optional service and are available as a standalone service. Peer Support Specialists must provide Peer Support Services under the direction of a Behavioral Health Professional regardless of the setting in which they are delivered.

Medi-Cal Peer Support Services may be claimed for Medi-Cal beneficiaries who are receiving care from facilities or programs certified for outpatient, inpatient, and residential SMHS, DMC, and DMC-ODS services, including hospital-based residential and withdrawal management services (ASAM Level 3.7, 4.0, 3.7-WM and 4.0 WM). Medi-Cal Peer Support Services may be claimed in addition to, and concurrently with, residential or inpatient services that are claimed at per diem rates.

SMHS, DMC, and DMC-ODS claims shall include taxonomy code 175T00000X (Peer Support Specialist) for reimbursement. All claims shall be billed in 15-minute increments. Below are the procedure codes and modifier combinations for claiming Medi-Cal Peer Support Services before and after CalAIM Payment Reform changes go live in SD/MC on July 1, 2023.

The Medi-Cal Peer Support Services components (see definitions above) should be claimed under the identified codes as follows:

- Self-Help/Peer Services for Individuals (H0038)
 - Engagement
 - Therapeutic Activity
- Behavioral Health Prevention Education Service for Groups (limited to 2-12 Medi-Cal beneficiaries) (H0025)
 - Educational Skill Building Groups

Before July 1, 2023:

SMHS Healthcare Common Procedure Coding System (HCPCS) and modifier combinations

Service Description	Procedure Code	Modifier 1
Behavioral Health Prevention Education Service	H0025	HE
Self-Help/Peer Services	H0038	HE

DMC-ODS HCPCS and modifier combinations

Service Group and Service Description	Procedure Code	Modifier 1	Modifier 2
ODS/NTP (ASAM 1.0-OTP) - Behavioral Health Prevention Education Service	H0025	UA	HG
ODS/NTP (ASAM 1.0-OTP)- Self-Help/Peer Services	H0038	UA	HG
ODS/ODF (ASAM 0.5, 1.0-OTP) - Behavioral Health Prevention Education Service	H0025	U7	
ODS/ODF (ASAM 0.5, 1.0-OTP) - Self-Help/Peer Services	H0038	U7	
ODS/IOT (ASAM 2.1) - Behavioral Health Prevention Education Service	H0025	U8	
ODS/IOT (ASAM 2.1) - Self-Help/Peer Services	H0038	U8	
ODS/PH (ASAM 2.5) - Behavioral Health Prevention Education Service	H0025	UB	
ODS/PH (ASAM 2.5) - Self-Help/Peer Services	H0038	UB	
ODS/RES 3.1 - Behavioral Health Prevention Education Service	H0025	U1	
ODS/RES 3.1 - Self-Help/Peer Services	H0038	U1	
ODS/RES 3.3 - Behavioral Health Prevention Education Service	H0025	U2	
ODS/RES 3.3 - Self-Help/Peer Services	H0038	U2	

ODS/RES 3.5 - Behavioral Health Prevention Education Service	H0025	U3	
ODS/RES 3.5 - Self-Help/Peer Services	H0038	U3	
ODS/RES 3.2 - Behavioral Health Prevention Education Service	H0025	U9	
ODS/RES 3.2 - Self-Help/Peer Services	H0038	U9	

DMC HCPCS and modifier combinations

Service Group and Service Description	Procedure Code	Modifier 1
IOT or ODF - Behavioral Health Prevention Education Service	H0025	
IOT or ODF - Self-Help/Peer Services	H0038	
NTP - Behavioral Health Prevention Education Service	H0025	HG
NTP - Self-Help/Peer Services	H0038	HG

For DMC and DMC-ODS claims, use Youth modifier “HA” and/or Pregnancy modifier “HD” when applicable. A level of care “U modifier” is also required for DMC-ODS services. The level of care modifier shall correspond to the service group for which the service facility location is DMC certified.

When reporting units of service and costs for Medi-Cal Peer Support Services on the SMHS Cost Report, use Mode 15, Service Function 20.

After July 1, 2023:**SMHS Healthcare Common Procedure Coding System (HCPCS) and modifier combinations**

Service Description	Procedure Code	Modifier 1
Behavioral Health Prevention Education Service	H0025	
Self-Help/Peer Services	H0038	

Please note that after July 1, 2023, outpatient procedure codes will no longer require the HE modifier in the SMHS delivery system. If an outpatient procedure code is

submitted with the HE modifier, the claim will be denied for using an invalid procedure code and modifier combination.

DMC-ODS HCPCS and modifier combinations

Service Group and Service Description	Procedure Code	Modifier 1	Modifier 2
ODS/NTP (ASAM 1.0-OTP) - Behavioral Health Prevention Education Service	H0025	UA	HG
ODS/NTP (ASAM 1.0-OTP)- Self-Help/Peer Services	H0038	UA	HG
ODS/ODF (ASAM 0.5, 1.0-OTP) - Behavioral Health Prevention Education Service	H0025	U7	
ODS/ODF (ASAM 0.5, 1.0-OTP) - Self-Help/Peer Services	H0038	U7	
ODS/IOT (ASAM 2.1) - Behavioral Health Prevention Education Service	H0025	U8	
ODS/IOT (ASAM 2.1) - Self-Help/Peer Services	H0038	U8	
ODS/PH (ASAM 2.5) - Behavioral Health Prevention Education Service	H0025	UB	
ODS/PH (ASAM 2.5) - Self-Help/Peer Services	H0038	UB	
ODS/RES 3.1 - Behavioral Health Prevention Education Service	H0025	U1	
ODS/RES 3.1 - Self-Help/Peer Services	H0038	U1	
ODS/RES 3.3 - Behavioral Health Prevention Education Service	H0025	U2	
ODS/RES 3.3 - Self-Help/Peer Services	H0038	U2	
ODS/RES 3.5 - Behavioral Health Prevention Education Service	H0025	U3	
ODS/RES 3.5 - Self-Help/Peer Services	H0038	U3	
ODS/RES 3.2 - Behavioral Health Prevention Education Service	H0025	U9	

ODS/RES 3.2 - Self-Help/Peer Services	H003	U9	
---------------------------------------	------	----	--

DMC HCPCS and modifier combinations

Service Group and Service Description	Procedure Code	Modifier 1	Modifier 2
NTP - Behavioral Health Prevention Education Service	H0025	UA	HG
NTP - Self-Help/Peer Services	H0038	UA	HG
ODF - Behavioral Health Prevention Education Service	H0025	U7	
ODF - Self-Help/Peer Services	H0038	U7	
IOT - Behavioral Health Prevention Education Service	H0025	U8	
IOT - Self-Help/Peer Services	H0038	U8	
RES 3.1 - Behavioral Health Prevention Education Service	H0025	U1	
RES 3.1 - Self-Help/Peer Services	H0038	U1	
RES 3.3 - Behavioral Health Prevention Education Service	H0025	U2	
RES 3.3 - Self-Help/Peer Services	H0038	U2	
RES 3.5 - Behavioral Health Prevention Education Service	H0025	U3	
RES 3.5 - Self-Help/Peer Services	H0038	U3	

For DMC and DMC-ODS claims, use the Pregnancy modifier “HD” when applicable and use Youth modifier “HA” for 24-hour services. A level of care “U modifier” is also required for DMC and DMC-ODS services. The level of care modifier shall correspond to the service group for which the service facility location is DMC certified.

For complete billing information, please reference the SMHS and DMC/DMC-ODS located on the [MedCCC library](#) page. Questions about claiming for or reimbursement of

Behavioral Health Information Notice No.: 23-XXX
Page 24
Date

Medi-Cal Peer Support Services may be directed to MEDCCC@dhcs.ca.gov. All other questions related to peers should be emailed to peers@dhcs.ca.gov.

List of Enclosures

1. Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialist Certification Program Plan Submission Requirements
2. Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialist Certification Program Annual Reporting Requirements
3. Code of Ethics for Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialists in California

Sincerely,

Ivan Bhardwaj, Chief,
Medi-Cal Behavioral Health Policy Division

Enclosures