

Assembly Bill (AB) 2473

Behavioral Health Information Notice (BHIN) No: 25-029
Effective January 1, 2026

Housekeeping

- » If you have a technical question, please send an email to Sarah Leff from Aurrera Health Group: sarah.leff@aurrerahealth.com.
- » Questions can be submitted at any time via the Q&A feature on your Zoom control panel.
- » Today's meeting will be recorded. The recording and slides available at a later date.

AB 2473 amended Health & Safety Code 11833

Established core competency education requirements for registered and certified counselors and increased the number of educational hours for registered counselors.

1. The current Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders;
2. The American Society of Addiction Medicine (ASAM) criteria and continuum of ASAM levels of care, or other similar criteria and standards as approved by the department;
3. Utilizing cultural responsiveness, including for people with disabilities, and its implication for treatment;
4. Case management/care coordination;
5. Utilization of electronic health record systems;
6. Knowledge of medication assisted treatment;
7. Clinical documentation;
8. Knowledge of co-occurring substance use and mental health conditions;
9. Confidentiality;
10. Knowledge of relevant law and ethics
11. Professional boundaries; and
12. Delivery of services in the behavioral health delivery system.

Updates to Registered Counselor Terminology

- » “First-year registered counselor” means an individual who has been registered to provide AOD counseling services for less than one (1) year.
- » “Registered counselor” means an individual who has been registered to provide AOD counseling services for one (1) year or more and has renewed their registration at least one time.



80 hours of Education & Core Competency

Education Topics

Educational Requirements

- » **Individuals registered for the first time on or after July 1, 2025:** Required to complete core competency education topics & a minimum of 80 hours of education. This aligns with the number of education hours a peer support specialist must complete as specified in BHIN: 25- 010 Medi-Cal Peer Support Program Standards. **Peer support courses do not qualify to meet these new education standards.
- » **Individuals registered before July 1, 2025:** Required to complete 315 hours of AOD education, including core competency education topics, prior to initial certification, and are **exempt** from the 80-hour education minimum requirement.

Educational Requirement Exemptions

Statutory Exemptions

- » **AB 2473 Exemption:** Individuals who register as a counselor and have a master's degree in psychology, social work, marriage and family therapy, or counseling are exempt from the core competency education.
- » **AB 2473 Exemption:** Individuals registered before July 1, 2025, are exempt from the 80-hour education requirement.
- » **AB 1860 Exemption:** The following individuals are exempt from registration and or certification requirements:
 - A graduate student affiliated with university programs in psychology, social work, marriage and family therapy, or counseling, who is completing their supervised practicum hours to meet postgraduate requirements ([BHIN-23-008](#)).
 - An associate registered with the Board of Behavioral Sciences.
 - A licensed professional, as defined in [California Code of Regulations, Title 9, Chapter 8, § 13015](#).

First-Year Registered Counselors 6-Month Check In: Section 2B

Responsibility	Timeline
First-Year Registered Counselor Requirement	Within the first six (6) months of registration, the first-year registered counselor must provide written documentation to the certifying organization that a minimum of eighty (80) hours of education, including core competency education topics, has been completed.
Certifying Organization Requirement	Within forty-five (45) calendar days, the certifying organization shall review and send written notice to the first-year registered counselor stating the eighty (80) hours of education including core competency education topics, are incomplete or complete.
First-Year Registered Counselor Requirement	If incomplete, the first-year registered counselor must complete the missing education hours before their first-year registration expires.

First-Year Registered Counselor's Application for Registration Renewal Timeline: Section 2C

Responsibility	Timeline
First-Year Registered Counselor Timeline	» A minimum of one hundred twenty (120) calendar days prior to their expiration date (4 months before expiration) the first-year registered counselor must submit their registration renewal application.
Certifying Organization Application Timeline	» Within seven (7) calendar days the certifying organization shall confirm receipt of the application, specify the application review timeline, and include the certifying organization's contact information.
Certifying Organization Application Timeline	» Within forty-five (45) calendar days, the certifying organization shall review the application and send a written notice to the first-year registered counselor to indicate whether the application is approved, denied, or returned as incomplete.

First-Year Registered Counselor's Application for Registration Renewal Timeline: Section 2C Cont.

Responsibility	Timeline
First-Year Registered Counselor Timeline	» Within thirty (30) calendar days from the date of the written notice, the first-year registered counselor must respond if the application is incomplete.
Certifying Organization Application Timeline	» Within twenty-one (21) Calendar days, the certifying organization shall review the resubmission and send a written notice to the first-year registered counselor whether the application is approved, denied, or incomplete.

Registered Counselor Renewal (Annual)

Annual Education Requirements for Registered Counselors

- » Registered counselors who have fewer than three hundred fifteen (315) hours of AOD education must complete fifty (50) hours of AOD education to qualify for registration renewal.
- » Registered counselors who completed three hundred fifteen (315) hours of AOD education must submit twenty (20) hours of continuing education to the certifying organization to qualify for registration renewal.

Registered Counselor's Application for Annual Registration Renewal Timeline: Section 3C

Responsibility	Timeline
Registered Counselor Application Timeline	» A minimum of one hundred twenty (120) calendar days prior to the registered counselor's expiration date (4 months before expiration), the registered counselor must submit a registration renewal application, with proof of completion of education as required by Section 3C.
Certifying Organization Application Timeline	» Within seven (7) calendar days, the certifying organization shall confirm receipt of the application, specify the application review timeline, and include the certifying organization's contact information.
Certifying Organization Application Timeline	» Within forty-five (45) calendar days, the certifying organization shall review and send written notice to the registered counselor whether the application as required by Section 3C is approved, incomplete, or denied.

Registered Counselor's Application for Annual Registration Renewal Timeline: Section 3C Cont.

Responsibility	Timeline
Registered Counselor Application Timeline	» Within thirty (30) calendar days from the date of the written notice, the registered counselor must respond if the application is incomplete.
Certifying Organization Application Timeline	» Within twenty-one (21) calendar days, the certifying organization shall review the resubmission and send a written notice to the registered counselor indicating whether the application is approved, denied, or incomplete.

Registration Renewal and Expiration Dates

- » Applications submitted and approved before the expiration date - renewal date will be one year from the current expiration date.
- » Applications submitted and approved after the expiration date- the renewal date is one (1) year after the approval date.
- » Registration valid for one (1) year, unless revoked or suspended by DHCS or a certifying organization.



Compliance

» Effective January 1, 2026

- Individuals who register between July 1, 2025, and December 31, 2025, shall submit proof of the 80 hours of education and core competency education topics by July 1, 2026.
- Individuals who register on or after January 1, 2026, the six-month window takes effect immediately and they shall submit proof of the 80 hours of education and core competency education topics within 6 months of their initial registration date.
- Individuals who registered before July 1, 2025, must submit proof of core competency education topics prior to initial certification.



Timeframe Requirements

Registration Time Period	Example	Education Requirements and Due Dates
Registered prior to July 1, 2025	Individual registers on March 20, 2025	Counselor is required to submit proof of the core competency education topics to their certifying organization prior to initial certification.
Registered between July 1, 2025, and December 31, 2025	Individual registers on October 1, 2025	Counselor is required to submit 80 hours of education, including proof of core competency education topics to their certifying organization by July 1, 2026.
Registered on or after January 1, 2026	Individual registers on February 5, 2026	Counselor is required to submit 80 hours of education, including proof of core competency education topics, to their certifying organization by August 5, 2026.

Certifying Organization Access to AB 2473 Educational Providers and Courses

- » The certifying organizations are diligently approving education providers and courses in order to meet the requirements specified in BHIN No: 25-029 for first-year registered, registered and certified counselors.
- » The certifying organizations will publish a list of approved education providers and courses that may be used to meet the requirements for 80 hours of education, including core competency education topic requirements, by January 1, 2026.

University of San Diego, California (UCSD)

- » UC San Diego Division of Extended Studies to launch the Advancing SUD Counselor Education and Development (ASCEND) Program in January of 2026.
- » The 80-hour training program will be asynchronous, online and is free.
- » The program requires an application to verify CA residency.
- » There are 12 courses in the training program, each corresponding to a core competency in AB 2473.
- » Each course will take 1.5-3 weeks to complete.
- » Students may enroll in a course at any time.

UCSD's ASCEND Program

- » Courses are taught by individuals with expertise in SUD counseling.
- » Courses delivered on Canvas, and include videos, case studies, quick checks, interactive elements, and quizzes.
- » Instructors available to answer questions via email or during office hours.
- » Students receive a badge when they complete each course and a Certificate Award of Completion for completing 12 courses.

UCSD's ASCEND Program

- » Evaluations distributed at the conclusion of each course to gather student feedback.
- » Courses updated regularly based on feedback from students, instructors, and stakeholders.
- » All courses are for-credit, post-baccalaureate, professional-level courses.
- » UCSD will work with other institutions to facilitate transferability.
 - As with all UC San Diego Division of Extended Studies courses, the transfer of credit is determined by the receiving institution.



Questions & Answers



Resources

- [California Legislative Information: AB 2473](#)
- [AB 2473 BHIN 25-029](#)
- [DHCS Approved Certifying Organizations](#)
- [CCAPP Providers](#), [CADTP Providers](#), [CAADE Providers](#)
- DHCS Contact Email: DHCS.COINQUIRY@DHCS.CA.GOV

