



Peer Support Specialists for Medi-Cal Behavioral Health Services

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DHCS Peer Certification Timeline

January 2021	Peer Support Listening Session #1 <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Materials are available on the DHCS website</i>
March 2021	Peer Support Listening Session #2 <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Materials are available on the DHCS website</i>
April 2021	Behavioral Health Stakeholder Advisory Committee Meeting <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Materials are available on the DHCS website</i>
July 2021	Release BH Information Notice on Peer Support Specialist Certification Program Standards, available on the DHCS website
July 2021 and beyond	Interested counties will have the opportunity to opt in to Medi-Cal peer support specialist services
2022 (Upon CMS approval)	Medi-Cal peer support specialist services under State Plan DMC, SMHS, and/or DMC-ODS would be billable



**July 2021 Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialist
Certification Program
Behavioral Health Information Notice No: 21-041**



Statute Requirements: Certification Standards

Certain requirements to obtain certification are outlined in statute and cannot be altered, including the following:

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 or family member of the consumer.
4. Be willing to share their experience.
5. Have a strong dedication to recovery.
6. Agree, in writing, to adhere to a code of ethics.
7. Successfully complete the curriculum and training requirements for a peer support specialist.
8. Pass a certification examination approved by the department for a peer support specialist.



Statute Requirements: Certification Standards

Statute also details requirements to maintain certification as a Medi-Cal peer support specialist, including:

1. Adhere to the code of ethics and biennially sign an affirmation.
2. Complete any required continuing education, training, and recertification requirements.



Peer Support Specialist Certification Standards BHIN

Topics Covered in July 2021 Peer Support Specialist BHIN

1. Certification guidelines:
 - Standards for Initial Certification
 - Biennial Renewal
 - Lapsed Certification
 - Areas of Specialization
 - Grandparenting
 - State/County Reciprocity
 - Complaints and Corrective Actions
2. Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialist Certification Program Plan Submission Requirements
3. [Medi-Cal Code of Ethics for Peer Support Specialists in California](#)
4. Practice Guidelines
5. Supervision Standards
6. Reporting Requirements



Standards for Initial Certification

- For an initial certification of a peer support specialist, a Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialist Certification Program must:
 1. Ensure a candidate agrees to adhere to the Medi-Cal Code of Ethics for Peer Support Specialists;
 2. Ensure a candidate has completed the training curriculum that includes 80 hours of training - including didactic learning; and,
 3. Ensure the candidate has passed the initial certification exam.



Standards for Initial Certification: Code of Ethics

- The Medi-Cal Code of Ethics for Peer Support Specialists will be included in the BHIN and is posted on the [DHCS Peers webpage](#).
- DHCS will update the Code of Ethics as appropriate and certification programs must ensure that candidates agree to adhere to the most recent version posted.



Standards for Initial Certification: Training Curriculum

The training curriculum must incorporate the following core competencies:

1. The concepts of hope, recovery, and wellness
2. The role of advocacy
3. The role of consumers and family members
4. Psychiatric rehabilitation skills and service delivery, and addiction recovery principles, including defined practices
5. Cultural and structural competence trainings
6. Trauma-informed care
7. Group facilitation skills
8. Self-awareness and self-care
9. Co-occurring disorders of mental health and substance use
10. Conflict resolution
11. Professional boundaries and ethics
12. Preparation for employment opportunities
13. Safety and crisis planning
14. Navigation of, and referral to, other services
15. Documentation skills and standards
16. Confidentiality
17. Digital Literacy



Standards for Initial Certification: Areas of Specialization

- A Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialist Certification Program must implement a curriculum in the area of specialization for “Parent, Caregiver, and Family Member Peers” upon implementation of the Peer Support Specialist Certification Program.
- The following three areas of specialization must also be implemented by January 1, 2023:
 - Crisis Services
 - Forensic (Justice Involved)
 - Homelessness



Standards for Initial Certification: Additional Items

- Certification Exam (Approved by DHCS, must provide reasonable accommodations)
- Standards for Biennial and Lapsed Renewals
- Standards for Grandparenting and State/County Reciprocity
- Standards for Complaints and Corrective Action
- Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialist Certification Program Plan Submission Requirements
- Practice Guidelines
- Supervision Standards
- Reporting Requirements



Thank You!

- All other comments and feedback related to the implementation of Medi-Cal peer support services can be submitted at anytime to peers@dhcs.ca.gov.
- If you have any questions regarding the submission of your county DMC-ODS Waiver Fiscal Plan, contact BHFSSOps@dhcs.ca.gov
- DHCS will release more information in the coming months related to items not detailed in the released BHINs. The [peers website](#) will remain updated with new information throughout this process.