



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



GAVIN NEWSOM
GOVERNOR

DATE: May 6, 2022

Behavioral Health Information Notice No: 22-026

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: Drug Medi-Cal (DMC), Drug Medi-Cal Organized Delivery System (DMC-ODS) and Specialty Mental Health Services (SMHS) Peer Support Services

PURPOSE: To provide guidance regarding the submission of an opt-in letter and claiming requirements for Peer Support Services in the DMC, DMC-ODS and SMHS Programs.

REFERENCE: [BHIN Information Notice 21-041](#); [BHIN Information Notice 21-045](#); [BHIN Information Notice 21-075](#); [Welfare and Institutions Code \(W&I\) section 14045.19](#); [W&I section 14045.21](#)

BACKGROUND:

[Senate Bill \(SB\) 803 \(Beall, Chapter 150, Statutes of 2020\)](#) authorized the 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 implement the service. Accordingly, DHCS requested federal approval through State Plan Amendments (SPA) [SPA 20-0006-A](#), [SPA 21-0058](#) and [SPA 21-0051](#), which were approved by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) in December 2021. Effective July 1, 2022, counties that opt-in will be able to

implement Peer Support Services within DMC, DMC-ODS and/or the SMHS delivery system.

POLICY:

Peer Support Services

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 beneficiaries through strength-based coaching, support linkages to community resources, and to educate beneficiaries and their families about their conditions and the process of recovery. 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. Peer Support Services can include contact with family members or other collaterals (family members or other people supporting the beneficiary), 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.

DHCS guidance clarifies under [SPA 22-0024](#), and according to CMS' [Clarifying Guidance on Peer Support Services Policy](#), that 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. Peer Support Specialists providing services to the parents/legal guardians of a beneficiary 17 years of age and younger must have a "Parent, Caregiver, and Family Member" Peer Support Specialist Certification specialization and, per [CMS Medicaid Directors Letter #07-011](#), "should be self-identified consumers who are in recovery from mental illness and/or substance use; 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."

Peer Support Services are based on an approved plan of care that includes specific individualized goals as identified by [CMS Medicaid Directors Letter #07-011](#).

Peer Support Services include the following service components:

- **Educational Skill Building Groups** means providing a supportive environment in which beneficiaries and their families learn coping mechanisms and problem-solving skills in order to help the beneficiaries achieve desired outcomes. These

groups promote skill building for the beneficiaries in the areas of socialization, recovery, self-sufficiency, self-advocacy, development of natural supports, and maintenance of skills learned in other support services.

- **Engagement** means 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.
- **Therapeutic Activity** means a structured non-clinical activity provided by a 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. These activities may include, but are not limited to, advocacy on behalf of the beneficiary; promotion of self-advocacy; resource navigation; and collaboration with the beneficiaries and others providing care or support to the beneficiary, family members, or significant support persons.

Peer Support Services can be delivered and claimed as a standalone service or provided in conjunction with other SMHS, DMC, or DMC-ODS services, including inpatient and residential services.

In accordance with the Early Periodic Screening, Diagnostic and Treatment (EPSDT) mandate under Section 1905(r) of the Social Security Act, all Counties, irrespective of their choice to opt-in to providing Peer Support Services as a Medi-Cal service, must ensure that all beneficiaries under age 21 receive medically necessary 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 peer support services pursuant to the EPSDT mandate. Counties should refer to BHIN 21-073 regarding medical necessity criteria for SMHS and BHIN 22-003 regarding Medi-Cal SUD treatment services for beneficiaries under age 21 for further compliance with EPSDT requirements.

Peer Support Specialists

Peer Support Services are provided by Peer Support Specialists. A Peer Support Specialist is an individual with a current State-approved Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialist Certification Program certification and who meets all other applicable California state requirements, including ongoing education requirements. Peer Support Specialists provide services under the direction of a Behavioral Health Professional. A Behavioral Health Professional must 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 DMC, DMC-ODS, or SMHS.

Although Peer Support Services must be provided under the direction of a Behavioral Health Professional, Peer Support Specialists may be supervised by a Peer Support Specialist Supervisor who must meet applicable California state requirements.¹

Short Doyle Medi-Cal Claiming for Peer Support Services

By July 1, 2022, the Short Doyle Medi-Cal claiming system will be updated to add Peer Support Services. New procedure codes will be added for SMHS, DMC-ODS, and DMC as an optional service and will be available as a standalone service. Peer Support Services may be claimed for 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).

SMHS, DMC-ODS, and DMC claims must include taxonomy code 175T00000X (Peer Specialist) for reimbursement. All claims will be billed in 15 minute increments. Below are the procedure codes and modifier combinations for claiming Peer Support Services. Peer Support Services may be claimed in addition to, and concurrently with, residential or inpatient services that are claimed at per diem rates.

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

¹ For additional guidance regarding Peer Support Specialist Certification information and Peer Support Specialist Supervisor standards, please refer to [BHIN 21-041](#).

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-ODS and DMC 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 must correspond to the service group for which the service facility location is DMC certified.

The Peer Support Service components (see definitions above) should be claimed under the identified codes as follows:

- Self-Help/Peer Services (H0038)
 - Engagement
 - Therapeutic Activity
- Behavioral Health Prevention Education Service (H0025)
 - Educational Skill Building Groups

Process for Counties Opting to Implement Peer Support Services:

Counties that are opting-in to provide Peer Support Services effective July 1, 2022, are required to provide a letter to DHCS stating their request to opt-in to provide Peer Support Services, and indicating the program(s) (SMHS, DMC-ODS and/or DMC) for which they are opting-in. The letter must be signed by the Behavioral Health Director and emailed to CountySupport@dhcs.ca.gov by May 20, 2022, to implement peer support services effective July 1, 2022.

Counties that are not able to elect to opt-in to provide Peer Support Services by the May 20, 2022 deadline, will have the opportunity to opt-in every six months. DHCS will provide information about future opt-in opportunities in the future.

Questions about this policy may be directed to CountySupport@dhcs.ca.gov. Questions about claiming for or reimbursement of Peer Support Services may be directed to MEDCCC@dhcs.ca.gov.

Sincerely,

Original signed by

Shaina Zurlin, PsyD, LCSW, Chief
Medi-Cal Behavioral Health Division