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DIRECTOR

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



GAVIN NEWSOM  
GOVERNOR

DATE: February 10, 2023

Behavioral Health Information Notice No: 23-003  
Supersedes [BHIN 22-066](#)

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: Extended Deadlines for Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialist  
Grandparenting and Implementation of Medi-Cal Peer Support  
Specialist Certification Program Curriculum

PURPOSE: To extend the deadline to apply for Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialist  
certification via grandparenting and extend the deadline for  
implementation of the Crisis Services, Forensic (Justice Involved), and  
Homelessness areas of specialization.

REFERENCE: [Behavioral Health Information Notice 21-041](#)  
Welfare and Institutions Code [§ 14045.21](#)  
[BHIN 22-066](#)

BACKGROUND:

On July 22, 2021, DHCS issued BHIN 21-041, outlining requirements for Medi-Cal Peer Support Services Certification Program implementation, and directed entities implementing Medi-Cal Peer Support Certification Programs to adhere to the standards outlined in [BHIN 21-041](#), Enclosure 1, including requirements listed in Enclosure 1,

Section 4, Areas of Specialization, and Enclosure 1, Section 5, Grandparenting and Out of State Reciprocity.<sup>1</sup>

Within Section 4, Areas of Specialization, DHCS informed Medi-Cal Peer Support Services Certification Programs that the “Crisis Services,” “Forensic (Justice Involved),” and “Homelessness” areas of specialization will be implemented by January 1, 2023. Areas of specialization are described as extracurricular areas of focus or specialty for peers that are outside of the core peers curriculum.

Additionally, the requirements in Section 5, Grandparenting and Out of State Reciprocity, stated that Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialists (“Peers”) employed as a peer as of January 1, 2022 and seeking certification through the grandparenting process, must complete or begin the grandparenting process by December 31, 2022. The grandparenting process is defined as having either 1 year of paid or unpaid work experience (1550 hours) as a peer specialist and 20 hours of continuing education (CEs) or 1550 hours in 3 years, with 500 hours completed within the last 12 months working as a peer specialist and 20 hours of CEs. Out of state reciprocity applies to individuals who have met the above requirements through work as peers out of state and who seek to be certified under the DHCS standards.

**POLICY:**

Medi-Cal Peer Support Services Certification Programs Areas of Specialization

The deadline for Medi-Cal Peer Support Certification Programs to implement the following three areas of specialization is extended to July 1, 2023:

- Crisis Services
- Forensic (Justice Involved)
- Homelessness

Grandparenting

The deadline for Peers employed as a Peer on January 1, 2022, to seek certification through the grandparenting process is extended to June 30, 2023. Additionally, Peers employed as a Peer on January 1, 2022, must still be employed as a Peer on the date they submit their application, between January 1, 2022 and June 30, 2023, to be eligible for certification through the grandparenting process. All applicants who meet these

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<sup>1</sup> [Behavioral Health Information Notice 21-041, Enclosure 1](#)

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employment criteria must begin the application process on or before June 30, 2023, to be eligible for grandparenting.<sup>2</sup>

After this date, Peers seeking certification under a Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialist Certification Program must complete the initial certification process.

This BHIN supersedes any conflicting requirements set forth in any other BHIN or guidance in existence as of the date of publishing this BHIN. To the extent that there is conflict between the MHP contract, DMC contract, or the DMC-ODS Intergovernmental Agreement terms and this BHIN, the policy contained within the BHIN supersedes the contract terms. Questions regarding the Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialist Certification Program and requirements can be submitted to [peers@dhcs.ca.gov](mailto:peers@dhcs.ca.gov).

Sincerely,

Original signed by

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

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<sup>2</sup> Applicants must also meet all eligibility criteria in [BHIN 21-041 Enclosure 1 Section 5 to be eligible for grandparenting](#).