



Certified Peer Support Specialist Guidelines

County of Santa Cruz Behavioral Health Services offers Peer Support Specialist services for both Specialty Mental Health Services (SMHS) and Drug Medi-Cal Organized Delivery System Services (DMC-ODS network).

Per [BHIN 22-026](#), Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialists must 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 be listed in the California Medicaid State Plan as a qualified provider of SMHS and DMC-ODS.

- All SUD and Expanded SUD services provided through the DMC-ODS network, including Medi-Cal Peer Support Services, must be **recommended** by physicians or other LPHAs acting within their scope of practice and in accord with medical necessity.
- All SMHS, including Medi-Cal Peer Support Services, must be **recommended** by physicians or other Licensed Mental Health Professionals acting with their scope of practice and in accord with medical necessity.

Peer Support Specialists are required to have a Peer Support Specialist Supervisor

Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialist Supervisors **are not required** to be Behavioral Health Professionals, as defined in BHIN 22-026. As stated in [BHIN 21-041](#), Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialist Supervisors must meet at least **one** of the following qualifications:

- Have a Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialist Program 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 Behavioral Health Professional (including registered & certified SUD counselors) who has worked in the behavioral health system for a minimum of two years, and has completed a DHCS approved peer support supervisory training;

OR

- Have a high school diploma or GED, four years of behavioral health direct service experience that may include Peer Support Services; and have completed an approved peer support supervisory training curriculum.

If a Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialist's supervisor is not also a Behavioral Health Professional as defined in BHIN 22-026, the Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialist must also provide services under the direction of a Behavioral Health Professional who meets the above qualifications.

A Plan of Care, documented in a Progress Note is required for Peer Specialists to provide services. The Plan of Care is to include specific individualized goals.

- If the Plan of Care Progress Note is written by the Peer Specialist, then the Progress Note must be co-signed by a Peer Support Specialist Supervisor.
- If Behavioral Health Professionals, Non-LPHAs, MHRS, OT, and Other Qualified Professionals write the Plan of Care Progress Note on behalf of Peer Support Specialist, the Plan of Care shall be reviewed by the Peer Support Specialist and Peer Support Specialist Supervisor.
- The Plan of Care Progress Note Type should be marked as “Peer Specialist –Plan of Care” so that the plan can be in the client chart.
- **DMC-ODS / SUBG:** The Peer Support Specialist Plan of Care can be, but is not required to be, embedded as part of a comprehensive Treatment/Care Plan.

Subsequent Peer Support Progress Notes may be co-signed by the Peer Support Specialist’s Supervisor, although this is *not* required. Peer Support Specialists should refer to CalMHSA clinical documentation guides for [MHP](#) or [DMC for additional guidance](#).

Plan of Care Progress Note Template

“[Writer (if different than Peer) and] Certified Peer Support Specialist “Peer” met with person in care to develop the Plan of Care by discussing goals around their recovery and to establish a plan to meet these goals. The Peer will work with person in care and/or their significant support person to help them obtain their goals of (). Peer will provide services to support the goals of the client that were determined during the assessment, including providing coordination services, supporting in development of coping mechanisms, and supporting the client with learning tools to cope with their behavioral health challenges. This plan was reviewed with the person in care and approved by a Peer Support Specialist Supervisor.”

Peer Support Services Summary

Peer support services are culturally appropriate services that promote engagement, socialization, recovery, self-sufficiency, self-advocacy, development of natural supports and identification of strengths. Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialist services include, but are not limited to, prevention services, support, coaching, facilitation and/or education that is individualized. Peer support services may be provided with the person in care or significant support persons, with or without the person in care present, and aim to prevent relapse, empower persons in care through strengths-based coaching, support linkages to community resources and educate the person in care and their significant supports about their mental health condition(s) and the process of recovery. Services that include the person’s significant support persons remain focused on how to best support the person in care to reach their treatment goals. Case

management services are also provided, including planning, finding, and accessing community resources and services, coaching, mentoring, facilitation and/or psychoeducation. Services may be provided individually or in a group.

Service Codes

H0025 BH Prevention Education Services Group Behavioral Health Prevention Education service, delivery of service with target population to affect knowledge, attitude, and/or behavior. - **ONLY used for Group Activities** - Group activity providing a supportive environment in which beneficiaries and their families learn coping mechanisms and problem-solving skills to help the beneficiaries achieve desired outcomes. These non-clinical 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. This service/service code is only applicable to Certified Peer Support Specialists.

H0038 Self Help/Peer Services Individual Self-help/peer services, per 15 minutes - Used for ALL individual services - Peer Support Specialist led non-clinical activities and coaching to encourage and support beneficiaries to participate in behavioral health treatment, including support for beneficiaries in transitions between levels of care, and in developing their own recovery goals and processes. Peer Support Specialist role is to promote recovery, wellness, self-advocacy, relationship enhancement, development of natural supports, self-awareness and values, and maintenance of community living skills. Activities may include but are not limited to, advocacy on behalf of the beneficiary, resource navigation, and collaboration with the beneficiaries and others providing care or support to the beneficiary. This service/service code is only applicable to Certified Peer Support Specialists.

Peer Support Specialist and Peer Support Specialist Supervisor Certification

[Home - CA Peer Certification](#)

[Peer Certification - California Mental Health Services Authority \(calmhsa.org\)](http://calmhsa.org)

Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialist Supervisors must take a DHCS-approved Peer Support Supervisory training within 60 days of beginning to supervise a Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialist. Certificates should be sent to County Quality Improvement AskQI email.

Resources:

BHIN 22-026

BHIN 21-041

[CMS Directors' Letter 07-011](#)

[DHCS FAQ](#)