



## CA Medi-Cal Billing and Peer Certification Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

### Peer Workforce Investment (PWI) and Expanding Peer Organization Capacity (EPOC)

September 2022

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#### Part 1: Grantee Questions Answered by Lucero Robles, Director, Quality Assurance and Compliance, California Mental Health Services Authority (CALMHSA)

1. **Will counties require peer run organizations to be peer certified to contract? Where do we find the right person/agency to talk to in i.e. Orange County about Medi-Cal billing processes for Peer-based Recovery Community Organizations?**

We are not sure that counties will require peer run organizations to be peer certified to contract. As for the correct person, we suggest that you start with the county Behavioral Health director, and they can lead you to the right person. CalMHSA is not able to tell counties what to do and so we're not sure whether counties will require that that. All the majority of medical specialty mental health services and substance use disorder treatment services run through the county behavioral health plans, and so they will support and guide you in the certification toward medical billing.

2. **How will the grandparenting process be made accessible to peer support specialists who need to take the exam in a threshold language other than English? And how can they access scholarships?**

The grandparenting process is available through December 31, 2022, so any person who needs that qualification or meets those standards may apply for grandparenting process. The exam is being built and will be available for those early test takers or that initial exam administration next month, so approximately September. In the future, the new year, we will have the exam available in the 16 threshold languages in California, as reported by the Department of Healthcare Services. We are not able to, of course, create an exam in other languages until one has been finalized and that's what we're working on doing. In terms of the December 31, 2022 deadline, it is not something that the CalMHSA can change or modify.

Scholarships were provided through funding by the Department of Healthcare Services and are being administered by the CalMHSA on behalf of county behavioral health plan. The counties may have provided outreach or may have done things differently so it didn't specify how when or though that information was disseminated amongst their county members. That is completely left up to the county behavioral health plans, because they know the populations that they serve again tell me says here to administer the scholarship process. So you can contact your behavioral health plan and inquire about scholarships. We open scholarships approximately May of this year and the grandparenting process those for scholarships specifically bills for May, it has been extended for September 30, 2022. If you are not able to access county scholarships, we encourage you to use the funds from this project.

3. **What if they were here specialist in other states and now have moved here?**

You would be employed as a Peer in California as of January 1, 2022.

4. **What is the update with Peer Supervision training? Will this training be done by DHCS through an LMS?**

There is some standards set by DCHS, but the supervisory training will actually be a self-paced training and learning management system on the CalMHSA website. It'll be available to everyone, free of cost and you'll

register and then you'll take the training. It's paid through the Department of Healthcare Services, however, counties may elect to have their own supervisory training in lieu of the one that is offered at CalMHSA. In that situation, the county would need to get an approval directly from the Department of Health care service ticket for that.

**5. How can organizations become site certified for billing Medi-Cal? Once we receive information on becoming Medi-Cal approved, is there an accelerated path to becoming a Medi-Cal approved provider?**

That will be specific to each county so working with your kind of behavioral health director in training, certification for medical billing and don't know about an accelerated pathway. That would be something again to have a conversation with your local county.

**6. What if they don't qualify for grandfathering, can they just apply for training? And if you're grandfathering, do you have to take the exam?**

There's an exam for certification so whether that's through the grand parenting pathway or through what we call the initial certification pathway, which would, which requires the at our training from an approved training and both require an exam.

**7. Do peer support specialists need to specialize, or can they just be general peer support specialists?**

So there is the one certification, which is more generalized and then there's four specializations from the state which are not required- what is required is that certification component. Sometimes your employer may require you to receive additional training in those areas of specialization but, again, that would be more of an individual and employer relationship than you would on the certifying entity.

**8. When will we get information about what will be on the exam? What kind of study guide will be made available to grandparenting candidates, and when?**

We've been working on a study guide, so hopefully in the next week it will be available. The preparation guide will be an opportunity to see the development of the exam as well as the blueprint, which includes categories that will be included in the exam, as well as some practice exam questions and, of course, some techniques that you could use like relaxation and other things, to prepare yourself for the exam. So we'll make that available pretty quickly and, like I said, hopefully, in the next by next week and so that'll give people an opportunity for those that are grandparents also utilize the preparation material toward the exam

**9. How often will the exam be offered in 2022?**

The exam will be offered ongoing on a continuous basis and it's an online platform. It's 120 items and it's two and a half hours with one break in between, and will be available all year long.

**10. Is the grandfathering exam harder or easier than the original one? If someone doesn't pass the grandfather in test can you just take standard one instead?**

There's only one exam it's the same exam so it's equally challenging. It's just one exam and then So if you don't pass, you will pass, but if you don't ask. You can apply to retake the exam again, and there is no wait period that you have to wait in between, taking the exam, but there is a wait period in terms of our staff processing your application.

**11. Do you know already what the passing score?**

No that's what this initial exam. Those early test takers that's how they set that up.

**12. What will be the cost of the exam?**

We're still working closely with the Department of Healthcare Services on finalizing the fee schedule. We'll post it on our website, we already have a little tab waiting so we can put the information up there.

**13. Are we able to take the CPS training and the supervisor training?**

Yes, if you'd like.



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#### 14. What do grantees do about their TTA Plans and program goals if their county is opting out or they are being stone-walled by their county or CBHDA? What are their other options with the county?

Given that the medical billing system isn't up in place yet, and that was contract will end in mid February, it's possible that you won't be able to meet those goals. I.e. get everybody certified prior to the closure. What we will do is try to look at objectives that you have and try to change out the goals to make them more realistic or more accessible, given the timeline that we have. You will be working with your grantee liaison to help get this done. And if your county is opting out, there are a few options: 1) You can actually write to your boards of supervisors or your county directors, you can write to your county's DMH, you can organize groups to write collective letters (which we can help with) because we know that peer recovery support specialists are evidence based providers who really help with patients. So being proactive with your counties is the way to go.

#### 15. Where can we find the supervisor training?

It is available on the certification site, [CApeercertification.org](http://CApeercertification.org) and it will be available in a few months.

#### 16. Where can I find information on participating counties?

##### 9. Where can I find information on participating counties?

- The following counties are being represented by CalMHSA for the administration of their certification program. The following counties will be allotted scholarships.

1	Alameda	27	Placer
2	Amador	28	Plumas
3	Butte	29	Riverside
4	Calaveras	30	Sacramento
5	Colusa	31	San Bernardino
6	Contra Costa	32	San Diego
7	Del Norte	33	San Francisco
8	El Dorado	34	San Joaquin
9	Fresno	35	San Luis Obispo
10	Glenn	36	San Mateo
11	Humboldt	37	Santa Barbara
12	Inyo	38	Santa Clara
13	Kerns	39	Santa Cruz
14	Kings	40	Shasta
15	Lake	41	Sierra
16	Lassen	42	Siskiyou
16	Los Angeles	43	Solano
18	Madera	44	Sonoma
19	Marin	45	Stanislaus
20	Mendocino	46	Sutter-Yuba
21	Merced	47	Tehama
22	Modoc	48	Trinity
23	Mono	49	Tulare
24	Monterey	50	Tuolumne
25	Nevada	51	Ventura
26	Orange	52	Yolo

**Part 2: Additional Questions from Grantees (to be answered by Ivan Bhardwaj, Acting Chief, Medi-Cal Behavioral Health Division, California Department of Health Care Services (DHCS))**

1. How can DHCS motivate Counties to certify new organizations to become eligible to bill Medi-Cal
  2. Will counties require peer run organizations to be peer certified in order to contract?
    - a. RCO's (Recovery Community Organizations)?
  3. How to organizations that are running without a brick and mortar and wish to bill Medi-Cal become site certified?
  4. As an out-of-state, non-supervisory employee for One New Heartbeat (non-resident of CA), do I need to become certified in CA to meet the terms of our grant?
    - a. If yes, is the below language outlining the steps I need to take---i.e., will this be the same from county to county? (I copied it from the California Mental Health Services Authority: Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialist Certification (2022) Guidelines, Standards, & Procedures.)

204. Clarification for certification under the "out-of-state reciprocity" process for Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialists:

      1. An applicant seeking certification under the out-of-state reciprocity process shall meet the following standards:
        - A. There is no sunset date for seeking certification under this process. Applicants can apply at any time.
        - B. Meet requirements under section 201 and section 202 of this policy.
        - C. Meet at least one of the requirements below:
          1. One (1) year paid or unpaid work experience with a minimum accumulation of
          2. 1550 hours of experience in a peer role; or
          3. Minimum of 1550 hours in 3-years with 500 hours completed within the last
          4. 12-months, working as a peer
        - D. Have completed 20 hours of continued education. Six (6) hours must be in law and ethics.
        - E. Complete a peer training.
        - F. Submit three (3) letters of recommendation as follows:
          1. From a supervisor
          2. From a colleague/professional
          3. Self-recommendation describing the applicant's current role and responsibilities as a peer.
        - G. Successfully pass the state-approved Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialist Certification exam.
5. Will there be opportunities for training and test proctoring through online mediums since the grant does not allow funds to be used for out-of-state travel?
6. Will the stuff pertaining to parent/caregiver/family member "peers" be part of the general peer certification curriculum and on the general exam? Or is it going to be separate? For example, I'm looking at the "Parent, Caregiver, Family Member Peer Training Curriculum Core Competencies" in the CalMHSA document. Do non-"Parent, Caregiver, Family Members" need to know this too?

**Resources and New Information:**

- July 1<sup>st</sup> Medi-Cal asset revision: [Asset Limit Changes for Non-MAGI Medi-Cal](#)
- Approved peer cert training vendors: [Approved Training Vendors – CA Peer Certification](#)
- Peer Cert Exam Study Guide: [CalMHSA TestPrepGuide Clean-8.26.22.pdf \(capeercertification.org\)](#)
- Peer Support Specialist Certification Process Info: [Initial Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialist Certification Process – CA Peer Certification](#)
- Medical Behavioral Health Services Division: [BHS \(ca.gov\)](#)