

# SB 803 (BEALL) PROGRAM OVERVIEW

## **SB 803 Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialist Certification Program: An Overview**

- SB 803 was authored by Senator Jim Beall.
- This was the 3rd time a state peer certification bill made it to the governor's desk and the fourth version of the bill.
- Before September 25, 2020, when the bill was signed by Governor Newsome, California was only one of two states without a peer certification program.

### **What Is in SB 803**

- SB 803 provides core peer certification definitions.
- SB 803 defines the role of the Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) to establish statewide guidelines for counties, or an agency representing counties, to use in developing certification programs for the certification of peer support specialists.

DHCS is tasked with developing a demonstration or pilot project that shall do all of the following:

1. Include peer support specialist as Medi-Cal provider type for purposes of the demonstration or pilot project
2. Include peer support specialist services as a distinct service type in counties that opt-in to the demonstration or pilot project.
3. Develop and implement one or more billing codes, reimbursement rates, and claiming requirements for peer support specialist services.

SB 803 authorize a county or agency representing counties to develop a peer support specialist certification program in accordance with the standards developed by the Department. The County or agency representing the county will oversee and enforce the certification requirement.

SB 803 is not a statewide certification. Counties opt in for the demonstration or pilot project. Counties that opt in agree to fund the non-federal share of any applicable expenditures.

SB 803 does not initiate a state plan amendment. It supports a demonstration or pilot project.



SB 803 primarily limits billing to eligible Medi-Cal beneficiaries who receive specialty mental health services or Drug Medi-Cal services.

### **What Has Happened since SB 803 Was Signed: October 2020 – July 2021**

DHCS Publishes Statewide Peer Certification Guidelines on July 22, 2021 in Behavioral Health Information Notice (BHIN) #21-041

[https://www.dhcs.ca.gov/Documents/CSD\\_BL/BHIN-21-041.pdf](https://www.dhcs.ca.gov/Documents/CSD_BL/BHIN-21-041.pdf) (QR code available on page 3)

SB 803 States, “The department shall solicit stakeholder input that may include input from the Office of Statewide Health Planning and Development, peer support and family organizations, mental health services and substance use disorder treatment providers and organizations, the County Behavioral Health Directors Association of California, and the California Behavioral Health Planning Council in implementing this article. Consultation shall include regular stakeholder meetings. The department may additionally conduct technical workgroups upon the request of stakeholders.”

The DHCS solicited and welcomed stakeholder input through Listening Sessions, and multiple meetings with stakeholder groups.

CAMHPRO/LEAD formed a statewide workgroup of 125 peers who were interested in providing input into the DHCS’s developing peer certification guidelines. This large group formed topic specific work groups. Many of these peer workgroups and other combination of peers met with the DHCS, as well as submitted recommendations on the many issues for which guidelines were being developed. Peers had a meaningful and significant voice in the development of the peer certification guidelines. Their voice is evident in the recommendations.

The DHCS went a step further in valuing and investing in peer providers and peer run organizations. The DHCS is funding two grants to build the capacity of the peer provider workforce and peer run programs: Expanding Behavioral Health Peer-Run Programs for which 46 established peer run organizations have been awarded grants, and the Expanding Peer Organization Capacity for newly formed peer run organizations, applications due August 25, 2021 and to be awarded in September.

### **Next Steps**



The implementation of peer certification is now in the hands of the counties or agency representing counties.

CalMHSA was selected by the County Behavioral Health Directors Association to be the agency representing counties, although counties had the opportunity to opt out of joining CalMHSA and implement peer certification on their own. CalMHSA or counties must have their peer certification implementation application into DHCS by November 19, 2021.

CalMHSA has issued a **“Request for Statement of Qualifications (RFSQ) Peer Support Specialist Certification Training.”** Applications due by 5:00pm on Tuesday, August 31, 2021

### **Lead the Way, Speak Out, and Make Change**

**Peers must continue their advocacy to influence the outcome of peer certification in the State. DHCS has awarded CAMHPRO a contract for the Peer Workforce Expansion Program to advocate and provide technical assistance and training to the DHCS, CalMHSA and counties through organizing peers at all levels to have meaningful and substantial input into the roll out of peer certification in California. CAMHPRO is committed to do everything in its power to bring the peer voice to the decision making tables at every level of peer certification implementation!**

Department of Health Care Services: Behavioral Health Information Notice No: 21-041  
*Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialist Certification Program Implementation*



To access the full document, open the camera on your smart phone and hold it over the QR code. You will then be prompted to open the link in your phone's web browser.