



COUNTY OF YOLO
HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES AGENCY

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

SECTION 5, CHAPTER 1, POLICY 024

PEER SUPPORT SERVICES

POLICY NUMBER:	5-1-024
SYSTEM OF CARE:	BEHAVIORAL HEALTH
FINALIZED DATE:	04/10/2024
EFFECTIVE:	07/01/2022
SUPERSEDES # :	Supersedes Policy #'s: N/A

A. PURPOSE: To establish uniform guidelines and requirements for Yolo County Health and Human Services Agency (HHS) staff and Network Providers in the provision of peer support services in accordance with Federal and State requirements.

B. RELATED DOCUMENTS:

1. Peer Support Specialist Code of Ethics

C. DEFINITIONS:

1. **Peer Support Services:** 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. Peer support services are provided by a Peer Support Specialist.
2. **Peer Support Specialist:** A Peer Support Specialist (also referred to as a “peer”) is an individual in recovery with a current State-approved Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialist Certification Program certification and must meet all other applicable California state requirements, including ongoing education requirements.

D. POLICY:

1. Peer support specialists have long acted as a part of the prevention, early intervention, treatment, and recovery process for individuals living with mental health (MH) conditions and substance use disorders (SUDs). As individuals with either lived experience, or as the parents, caregivers and family members of individual living with MH and/or SUD conditions, peer support specialists personally understand the experience of the individuals they serve and can help clarify the most effective set of services for each individual's recovery needs. Yolo County recognizes the value that the peer support specialist role brings to Specialty Mental Health (SMH) and Drug Medi-Cal-Organized Delivery System (DMC-ODS) members and as such encourages the employment of peer support specialists within our delivery systems.
2. Peer support services aim to prevent relapse, empower members through strength-based coaching, support linkages to community resources, and to educate members and their families about their conditions and the process of recovery.
3. Effective July 1, 2023, peer support specialists may specialize in one of four areas of specialization:
 - a. Parent, Caregiver and Family Member
 - b. Forensic (Justice Involved)
 - c. Homelessness
 - d. Crisis Services
4. Only peer support specialists certified through CalMHSA are able to claim these services to Medi-Cal. For more information, please visit CalMHSA's peer certification website.
5. Yolo County will comply with all DHCS reporting requirements as required.

E. PROCEDURE:

1. To become a certified peer support specialist, an individual shall:
 - a. Agree to adhere to the Medi-Cal Code of Ethics for Peer Support Specialists
 - b. Complete the training curriculum that includes 80 hours of training, including didactic learning
 - c. Pass the initial certification exam
2. To become a peer support specialist supervisor, an individual shall:
 - a. Complete a DHCS-approved peer support supervisory training curriculum, AND one of the following:

- i. Have a Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialist Certification Program certification and two years of experience working in the behavioral health system; OR
 - ii. Have worked as a non-peer behavioral health professional (including registered and certified SUD counselors) in the behavioral health system for a minimum of two years; OR
 - iii. Have a high school diploma or GED and four years of behavioral health direct service experience that may include peer support services.
3. Peer support specialists shall uphold values and ethics standards in the following areas: Hope, Person-Driven, Family Driven and Child-Centered, Holistic Wellness, Authenticity, Cultural Responsiveness and Humility, Respect, Integrity, Advocacy, Confidentiality, Safety and Protection, Education, Mutuality, Reciprocity, Strengths-Based, Wellness, Recovery and Resiliency.
 - a. For the full Code of Ethics refer to the Peer Support Specialist Code of Ethics.
4. Peer support specialists shall provide services under the direction of a behavioral health professional who is 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-ODS or SMH.
 - a. Although peer support services shall 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.
5. Peer support services include the following service components:
 - a. Educational Skill Building Groups:
 - i. Groups provide a supportive environment in which members and their families learn coping mechanisms and problem-solving skills in order to help the members achieve desired outcomes.
 - ii. Groups promote skill building for the members in areas of socialization, recovery, self-sufficiency, self-advocacy, development of natural supports and maintenance of skills learned in other support services.
 - b. Engagement Activities:
 - i. Engagement activities and coaching are intended to encourage and support members to participate in behavioral health treatment.
 - ii. Engagement may include supporting members in their transitions between levels of care and supporting members in developing their own recovery goals and processes.
 - c. Therapeutic Activities:

- i. 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 member's treatment and to attain and maintain recovery within their communities.
 - ii. Activities may include, but are not limited to, advocacy on behalf of the member, promotion of self-advocacy, resource navigation, and collaboration with the members and others providing care or support to the member, family members or significant support persons.
6. Provision of services by peer support specialists:
 - a. Peer support services may include contact with family members or other collaterals (family members or other people supporting the member), if the purpose of the collateral's participation is to focus on the treatment needs of the member by supporting the achievement of the member's goals. There may be times, when based on clinical judgment, the member is not present during the delivery of the services but remains the focus of the service.
 - b. Peer support services may be provided face-to-face, by telephone or by telehealth with the member or the significant support person and may be provided anywhere in the community.
7. In accordance with Early Periodic Screening, Diagnostic and Treatment (EPSDT) mandate, Yolo County shall ensure that all members under age 21 receive medically necessary peer support services to correct or ameliorate health conditions.
8. Peer support services may be delivered and claimed as a standalone service or provided in conjunction with SMH or DMC-ODS services, including inpatient and residential services.

F. REFERENCES:

1. DHCS Information Notice 21-041: Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialist Certification Program Implementation
2. DHCS Information Notice 22-018: Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialist Supervisor Training Requirements for Counties
3. DHCS Information Notice 22-026: Drug Medi-Cal (DMC), Drug Medi-Cal Organized Delivery System (DMC-ODS) and Specialty Mental Health Services (SMHS) Peer Support Services
4. DHCS Information Notice 22-061: Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialist Areas of Specialization

5. DHCS Information Notice 23-003: Extended Deadlines for Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialist Grandparenting and Implementation of Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialist Certification Program Curriculum
6. DHCS Information Notice 24-001: Drug Medi-Cal Organized Delivery System (DMC-ODS) Requirements for the Period of 2022-2026
7. Yolo County Mental Health Plan Contract
8. Yolo County DMC-ODS Intergovernmental Agreement

Approved by:

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Yolo County Health and Human Services Agency**

Date