



# SENATOR JIM BEALL

## SB 10 Peer Provider Certification

Principal Coauthor: Asm. Waldron

Coauthors: Sen. Nielsen, Asms. Carrillo, C. Garcia, Grayson, Maienschein & Wicks

### BACKGROUND

A peer provider is a person who draws on lived experience with mental illness and/or substance use disorder and recovery, bolstered by specialized training, to deliver valuable support services in a mental health and/or substance use setting. Across the nation, peer support programs have emerged as an evidence-based practice with proven benefits to both peers and the clients they assist. Peers can include people who have lived experience as clients, family members, or caretakers of individuals living with mental illness.

As noted by the California Mental Health Planning Council, California lags behind the nation in implementing a peer support specialist certification program. The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs and 48 states have a certification process in place or in development for mental health peer support specialists. Thirteen states have a certification process for SUD peer recovery coaches. The federal Centers for Medicare and Medicaid released guidance in 2007 for establishing a certification program for peers to enable the use of federal Medicaid (Medi-Cal in California) financial participation with a 50% match. Yet California has not acted.

The Working Well Together Statewide Technical Assistance Center, a collaborative of peer and client-oriented organizations, has done substantive work on this issue in California, culminating in a final report and recommendations.

Studies demonstrate that use of peer support specialists in a comprehensive mental health or substance disorder treatment program helps reduce client hospitalizations, improve client functioning, increase client satisfaction, alleviate depression and other symptoms, and diversify the mental health workforce.

Research is also clear that the use of a formal certification program to train peer supporters offers enormous benefits, including:

- Allowing providers to make use of the federal Medi-Cal match.
- Allowing for standardization of the peer support practice, to ensure the highest quality care.
- Establishing core competencies that allow certified peers to transfer skills across county lines.

Although the Department of Health Care Services anticipates there will be substantial growth in the demand for peer support specialists, there is no statewide scope of practice, training standards, supervision standards, or certification.

### THIS BILL

SB 10, the Peer Provider Certification Act of 2019 has two primary goals:

First, it requires the Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) to establish a certification program for peer providers with four distinct certification categories: peer, parent, transition-age, and family support specialist. Among other things, the program defines the range of responsibilities and practice guidelines for peer support specialists, specifies required training and continuing education requirements, determines clinical supervision requirements, and establishes a code of ethics and processes for revocation of certification.

Second, the bill expresses the intent of the Legislature that the program will provide increased family support, a fuller continuum of wraparound services, and an individualized focus on clients to promote recovery and self-sufficiency.

### SPONSORS

The Steinberg Institute  
County of Los Angeles Board of Supervisors  
MHSOAC

### SUPPORT

ACCESS California  
American College of Emergency Physicians  
Anti-Recidivism Coalition

Arc of California  
Association of California Healthcare Districts  
Association of Community Human Service Agencies  
Association of Regional Center Agencies  
Bay Area Community Services  
California Alliance of Child and Family Services  
California Association of Alcohol and Drug Program Executives, Inc. (CAADPE)  
California Association of Public Hospitals and Health Systems (CAHP)  
California Association of Local Behavioral Health Boards & Commissions  
California Association of Mental Health Peer Run Organizations  
California Association of Social Rehabilitation Agencies  
California Association of Veteran Service Agencies  
California Behavioral Health Directors Association (CBHDA)  
California Behavioral Health Planning Council (CBHPC)  
California Children's Trust  
California Coalition for Mental Health  
California Council of Community Behavioral Health Agencies (CBHA)  
California Down Syndrome Advocacy Coalition  
California Hospital Association  
California Society of Addiction Medicine  
California State Association of Counties  
Children Now  
City of San Jose  
City of Santa Monica  
Community Clinic Association of Los Angeles County  
Community Mental Health Certificate Program at City College of San Francisco  
Corporation for Supportive Housing  
County Behavioral Health Directors Association (CBHDA)  
County of Santa Clara  
County of Ventura  
County Welfare Directors Association  
Crestwood Behavioral Health, Inc.  
Daniel's Place  
Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance  
Didi Hirsch Mental Health Services  
Disability Rights California  
Juvenile Court Judges of California  
Innovations Health Systems  
Manzanita Services  
Mental Health America of California  
Mental Health America of Los Angeles  
Mental Health America of Northern California  
Mental Health Association of San Francisco  
NAMI Amador  
NAMI California  
NAMI Sacramento  
National Association of Social Workers  
Pacific Clinics  
Peers Envisioning and Engaging in Recovery Services

Pool of Consumer Champions  
Private Essential Access Community Hospitals  
Project Return Peer Support Network  
SEIU California  
Seneca Family of Agencies  
Telecare Corporation  
The Arc and United Cerebral Palsy California Collaboration  
The Psychiatric Occupational Therapy Action Coalition  
United Cerebral Palsy California  
Western Center on Law and Poverty

## FOR MORE INFORMATION

---

Carrie Holmes  
Office of Senator Jim Beall  
(916) 651-4015  
[Carrie.Holmes@sen.ca.gov](mailto:Carrie.Holmes@sen.ca.gov)

