

Peer Support Services/Certified Peer Specialists

Brought to you by Value Behavioral Health-PA

A Certified Peer Specialist is a paid staff person with a mental health or co-occurring disorder who has been trained and certified to help his/her peers identify and achieve specific life goals. The Certified Peer Specialist promotes self-determination, personal responsibility and empowerment inherent in recovery, and assists people with mental illnesses to regain control over their lives and their recovery process.

Question: Is every county required to offer Peer Support Services?

Answer: Yes, under Medicaid. Peer Support Services are now a Medicaid service. That means any Medicaid recipient who meets the medical necessity criteria for the service is entitled to receive the service. Therefore, every county or county joiner must insure that this service is available, under Medicaid to meet the need.

Question: Are HealthChoices Counties required to offer Peer Support Services?

Answer: Yes. Peer Support Services have been added to the State Medicaid Plan and are now a required in-plan service in HealthChoices. HealthChoices counties must insure that the service is available in sufficient quantity to meet the need and must insure that there is a choice of at least two providers.

Question: Are Peer Support Services only a Mental Health service?

Answer: Peer Support Services are currently designed for individuals with a mental illness or a mental illness and co-occurring substance disorder.

Question: Can individuals receive Peer Support Services and other Medicaid billable services such as case management, partial, etc?

Answer: Yes. Peer Support Services may be provided in conjunction with other Medicaid services, including case management; however, in fee for service more than one service cannot be provided to the same individual during the same time period.

Question: Who is eligible for Peer Support Services?

Answer: A person who is 18 years of age or older and is a MA recipient, has a serious mental illness as defined in MH bulletin OMH- 94-04, and has a moderate to severe functional impairment that interferes or limits performance in at least one of the following areas: educational, vocational, social, self maintenance (managing symptoms, understanding his/her illness, managing money, living more independently).

Question: Does a physician/ mental health professional need to make the referral to Peer Support Services, or can a person self-refer?

Answer: Anyone, including the individual, can make a referral to Peer Support Services. However, a physician, licensed psychologist, certified registered nurse practitioner, or physician's assistant must "recommend" that this is a medically necessary service.

Question: Must the functional impairment that qualifies a person for the service be due to a mental illness or can it be caused by other factors such as secondary diagnosis that is physical in nature?

Answer: The functional impairment must be due to mental illness.

