



Clerk of the Board of Supervisors
105 E. Anapamu Street, Suite 407
Santa Barbara, CA 93101
(805) 568-2240

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS AGENDA LETTER

Department Name:

Behavioral Wellness

Department Number:

043

Agenda Date:

July 7, 2026

Placement:

Administrative Agenda

Estimated Time:

N/A

Continued Item:

No

If Yes, date from:

N/A

Vote Required:

Majority

TO: Board of Supervisors

FROM: Department Director: Antonette Navarro, LMFT, Director

Department of Behavioral Wellness

Initial
AN

CONTACT: Traci Lewis, CMPSS, Peer Empowerment Manager

Department of Behavioral Wellness

SUBJECT: Second Amendment to the Participation Agreement with California Mental Health Services Authority (CalMHSA) for Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialist Certification Program Administrative Services for Fiscal Year 2024-26

Concurrences:

County Counsel Concurrence:

As to form: Yes

Auditor-Controller Concurrence:

As to form: Yes

Other Concurrence: Risk Management

As to form: Yes

Recommended Actions:

That the Board of Supervisors:

- a) Approve and authorize the Chair to execute a Second Amendment to the Participation Agreement with California Mental Health Services Authority (CalMHSA) for Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialist Certification Program administrative services (Contract SANTA BARBARA PEERS DATA PA 10.1.24) to extend the term of the agreement from August 31, 2026, through August 31, 2027, with no change to the agreement amount of \$0; and
- b) Determine that the above-recommended action is not a project that is subject to environmental review under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), pursuant to CEQA Guidelines section 15378(b)(4) and (b)(5), finding that the action is a governmental funding mechanism and/or administrative or fiscal activity that will not result in direct or indirect physical changes in the environment.

Summary Text:

The above-referenced item is on the agenda to request that the Board of Supervisors approve and authorize the Chair to execute a Second Amendment to the Participation Agreement with California Mental Health Services Authority (CalMHSA) for Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialist Certification Program administrative services to extend the term of the agreement from August 31, 2026, through August 31, 2027. CalMHSA provides certification of Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialists and the administration of a uniform program that meets the Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) requirements.

Discussion:

CalMHSA's Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialist Certification Program has been incredibly effective. As of June 1, 2026, a total of 79 Certified Peer Support Specialists have received their certifications through CalMHSA. Behavioral Wellness (BWell) employees who have received their certifications include 20 working as Certified Peers, five Case Workers, one Associate Social Worker, one Alcohol and Other Drugs (AOD) Specialist, one Community Outreach Manager, and one Peer Manager. 18 BWell Certified Peers are trained in both Parent, Family Member, Caregiver and Justice-Involved Peer Support specializations. BWell recently added positions throughout the system of care to staff up to 27 BWell Peer Support Specialists.

BWell now requests Board of Supervisors' approval of the Second Amendment to the Agreement to extend the term of the agreement from August 31, 2026, through August 31, 2027. There is no cost associated with this Participation Agreement.

Background:

In 2016, the Board of Supervisors approved the County's membership in CalMHSA, a Joint Powers Authority (JPA) under Gov. Code §6500 et seq. that serves California counties as an independent administrative and fiscal intergovernmental structure for jointly developing, funding, and implementing mental health services and educational programs at the state, regional, and local levels.

In September 2020, Senate Bill (SB) 803 (Beall, Chapter 150, Statutes of 2020) was chaptered, requiring DHCS to seek federal approval to establish "Peer Specialist" as a provider type and to deliver

distinct peer support services as an optional behavioral health Medi-Cal benefit in California under the Specialty Mental Health Services (SMH) and Drug Medi-Cal Organized Delivery Systems (DMC-ODS) programs. As part of this process, DHCS was required to determine the peer certification standards in alignment with the provisions SB 803, and in accordance with Centers for Medicare and Medicaid's (CMS) guidance. DHCS created a statewide standard for peer certification and monitoring certifying organizations and counties.

On June 15, 2022, the Board of Supervisors approved BC 22-00523 to execute the CalMHSA Peer Support Specialist Certification Program Participation Agreement 1084-PSSC-2021-SB to develop, implement, and administer all components of the aforementioned Medi-Cal certification program under Medi-Cal SMHS and DMC-ODS in accordance with the DHCS Behavioral Health Information Notice 21-041 from January 1, 2022, through December 31, 2022, at no cost to the members.

On April 23, 2024, the Board of Supervisors approved BC 24-00370 to establish the job classifications of Behavioral Wellness Peer Support Specialist Trainee (Class #1201, Range #1201, \$25.261 hourly to \$30.062 hourly) and Behavioral Wellness Peer Certified Support Specialist (Class #1202, Range #1202, \$27.281 hourly to \$32.466 hourly), reclassifying thirty-one (31) existing legal positions to these new classifications.

The Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialist Certification Program supports Counties in implementing the optional Medi-Cal Peer Support benefit in accordance with DHCS Behavioral Health Information Notice 21-041 (BHIN) and updated BHIN guidance. CalMHSA represents Counties in the administration of a uniform peer certification program that meets state requirements.

CalMHSA is the certifying entity for Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialists. As the Certifying Entity, CalMHSA is responsible for the administrative functions of the program. To this end, CalMHSA has established a dedicated certification website for information about certification in California (See capeercertification.org). The development of a Certification Portal anchored to the website allows candidates to apply for certification through the website. The Portal is instrumental in aiding CalMHSA in the collection of candidate information necessary for ensuring each candidate meets certification standards, issuing certifications, and the collection of candidate data used for program evaluation and annual reporting required and set by the DHCS. Additionally, CalMHSA is responsible for the enforcement of professional standards for certification, maintaining the public-facing certification registry, the approval of training providers, and administration of the examination for certification. Lastly, CalMHSA is responsible for conducting investigations into allegations made against a certified professional for legal and ethical violations.

The Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialist Certification Program is funded through CalMHSA via individuals purchasing Medi-Cal related items (exams, applications, etc.), with no cost to the County.

On October 1, 2024, the County entered into Participation Agreement Santa Barbara PEERS DATA PA 10.1.24 to support the County in implementing the optional Medi-Cal Peer Support benefit in accordance with DHCS Behavioral Health Information Notice 21-041 and updated BHIN guidance.

On April 1, 2025, the Board of Supervisors approved the First Amendment to the Agreement which extended the term of the agreement from August 31, 2025, through August 31, 2026.

Performance Measure:

CalMHSA facilitates the efficient use of resources for multiple public entities by providing group purchasing power, joint development of Requests for Proposals (RFPs) and contracts for services, reduced overhead costs through sharing of the expenses of administration and reporting, and shared research and strategies. CalMHSA's administration of this program will result in greater efficiency in the implementation of these mandated services for compliance with state and federal requirements.

Fiscal and Facilities Impacts:

Budgeted: Yes

Fiscal Analysis:

The Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialist Certification Program is funded through CalMHSA via individuals purchasing Medi-Cal related items (exams, applications, etc.), with no cost to the County.

Special Instructions:

Please email one complete, executed copy of the above Agreement and one Minute Order to Abbie Cown at abcown@sbcbswell.org and to bwellcontractsstaff@sbcbswell.org.

Attachments:

Attachment A – Santa Barbara PEERS DATA PA 10.1.24-AM2 (Signature Required)

Attachment B – Santa Barbara PEERS DATA PA 10.1.24-AM1

Attachment C – CalMHSA Peer Support Specialist Certification PA 10.1.24 EXECUTED

Contact Information:

Abbie Cown

Contract Analyst

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