



BOARD OF SUPERVISORS  
AGENDA LETTER

Agenda Number:

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

Submitted on:  
(COB Stamp)

**Department Name:** Behavioral Wellness  
**Department No.:** 043  
**Agenda Date:** April 1, 2025  
**Placement:** Administrative Agenda  
**Estimated Time:** N/A  
**Continued Item:** No  
**If Yes, date from:**  
**Vote Required:** Majority

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**TO:** Board of Supervisors  
**FROM:** Department Director(s): Antonette Navarro, LMFT, Director  
Department of Behavioral Wellness, (805) 681-5220  
Contact Info: Traci Lewis, CMPSS, Peer Empowerment Manager,  
Department of Behavioral Wellness, (805) 681-5220  
**SUBJECT:** California Mental Health Services Authority (CalMHSA) First Amendment to the  
Participation Agreement for Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialist Certification Program  
Administrative Services for FY 24-26

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**County Counsel Concurrence**

As to form: Yes

**Other Concurrence:**

As to form: Yes

**Auditor-Controller Concurrence**

As to form: Yes

**Recommended Actions:**

That the Board of Supervisors:

- a) Approve, ratify, and authorize the Chair to execute a First 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, 2025, to August 31, 2026, 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 the Board of Supervisors to approve and authorize the Chair to execute a First 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, 2025, through August 31, 2026.

**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 the Department of Health Care Services (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 Deliver 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 Department of Health Care Services ("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](http://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 of certification, 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 for 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 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 Department of Health Care Services ("DHCS") Behavioral Health Information Notice 21-041 and updated BHIN guidance.

BWell now requests Board Approval of the First Amendment to the Agreement to extend the term of the agreement from August 31, 2025, through August 31, 2026. This is a \$0 Participation Agreement.

**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.

**Performance Outcomes:**

As of October 1, 2024, a total of twenty-two (22) Certified Peer Support Specialists had received their certifications through CalMHSA. Behavioral Wellness (BWell) employees who have received their certifications include fourteen (14) working as Certified Peers, two (2) as Case Workers, one (1) as a Project Manager, and one (1) as the Peer Manager. There are also four (4) Certified Peers working with our community-based organizations. Last year the first BWell Certified Peer renewed their biennial certification. There is not yet any new data from Q4 2024.

**Fiscal 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 County.

**Special Instructions:**

Please email one (1) Minute Order and one (1) complete copy of the amendment to [drusso@sbcbswell.org](mailto:drusso@sbcbswell.org) and to [bwelcontractsstaff@sbcbswell.org](mailto:bwelcontractsstaff@sbcbswell.org).

Once executed by the Board of Supervisors and Minute Order is received, this amendment will be signed by Dr. Amie Miller, Executive Director of CalMHSA. A final copy will then be returned to the Clerk of the Board.

**Attachments:**

**Attachment A** – Santa Barbara PEERS DATA PA 10.1.24-AM1

**Attachment B** – CalMHSA Peer Support Specialist Certification PA 10.1.24 EXECUTED

**Authored by:**

David Russo  
Contract Analyst  
[drusso@sbcbswell.org](mailto:drusso@sbcbswell.org)