

Working Well Together

Training and Technical Assistance Center



What's Working Well

...In the Employment of People with Lived Experience of Mental Health Challenges, Parents and Family Members to Transform California's Public Behavioral Health Workforce

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<http://workingwelltogether.org/>

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Working Well Together (WWT) is a collaborative project comprised of the California Association of Mental Health Peer Run Organizations (CAMHRO)-PEERS, NAMI California, United Advocates for Children and Families, and the California Institute for Mental Health. Funded by the Mental Health Services Act (MHSA), the WWT Training and Technical Assistance Center supports the vision of the MHSA to transform systems to be client and family-driven. As such, WWT supports the sustained development of client, family member and parent/caregiver employment within every level of the public mental health workforce. The What's Working Well Quarterly News brief is produced and edited by [Karin Lettau, MS](#), WWT Technical Assistance Coordinator for the Southern Region. Translations and acculturations by [Gabriela Melano, Ed.D.](#)

Points of Interest in This Issue

- **WWT Summit & Draft Recommendations to State for Peer Certification**
- **Mental Health Loan Assumption Program**
- **State Developing Mental Health Career Pathways**
- **Monthly WWT Networking Calls**

Summit & Draft Final Recommendations to State for Certification of Consumer, Youth, Family Member & Parent Peer Specialists

Peer Support Services evolved from a 'promising' to an 'evidence-based' model of care, now supported by many State-instituted Certification programs allowing for Medicaid billing, but not in California, yet. At least 220 diverse stakeholders from thirty California counties attended the Sacramento WWT Summit in May. A "Final Report: Recommendations from the Statewide Summit on Certification of Peer Providers", is in the state approval process and will be released on the WWT website at <http://workingwelltogether.org>.

The 17 draft recommendations for certification follow:

1. Develop a statewide certification for Adult, Young Adult, and Older Adult Peer Support Specialists, Family Peer Support Specialists (Adult Services) and Parent or Caregiver Peer Support Specialists (Child/Family Services). Require a total of 80 hours of standardized content training for Peer Support Specialist Certification (55 hours general peer support education plus 25 hours specific to each category above). To become certified in a specialty area, require an additional 25 hours in a specialty such as forensics, co-occurring services, trauma care, whole health, youth in foster care or veterans. Require six months full-time equivalent experience in providing peer support services acquired through employment, volunteer work or as part of an internship experi-

ence. To maintain certification require 15 hours of continuing education per year in subject matter relevant to peer support services and re-certify every three years. Allow a grandfathering-in process in lieu of training with one year of full-time equivalent employment in peer support services and three letters of recommendation (one from supervisor, and others from co-workers and/or people served). Require an exam to demonstrate competency, administered in multiple languages, assure cultural competency, and provide test-taking accommodations. Require Peer Support Specialists to practice within an adopted Code of Ethics.

2. Identify or create a single certifying body that is peer-operated and/or partner with an existing peer-operated entity with capacity for granting certification.

3. Adopt definitions of Peer Support Specialist and Peer Support services developed by WWT and include Peer Support as a service and Peer Support Specialist as a provider type within a new State Plan Amendment. Maintain the ability for people with lived experience to provide services as "other qualified provider" within their scope of practice, including but not limited to rehabilitation services, collateral and targeted case...
(continued on next page)

State Can Assume up to \$10K of your Student Loans per Year

Are you working or volunteering at least half time in public mental health, either for a county or a non-profit? With outstanding student loans? Licensed or NOT licensed? Graduated or NOT graduated?

You may qualify to have up to \$10,000 of your student loans per year paid through the [Mental Health Loan Assumption Program \(MHLAP\)](#) after proof of service in public mental health each year for up to six years!!! Your county approves your eligibility and determines whether you are in a hard-to-fill position.

Over \$12 million was allocated for this last cycle to be paid directly to the loan institution in June, 2014.

For this next cycle, the application must be completed online by October 1, 2013 for year July 2014—July, 2015, accessible with Frequently Asked Questions, a webinar and county contacts at <http://www.oshpd.ca.gov/hpef/MHLAP.html>.

You may also qualify to apply for the Licensed Mental Health Services Provider Education Program (LMHSPEP) but you may only accept one. More on the LMHSPEP at <http://www.oshpd.ca.gov/hpef/LMHSPLRP.html>.
Way to make ends meet!

Draft Final Recommendations to State for Certification of Peer/Family Specialists (continued)

(continued from first page)...management. Acknowledge that there are important and non-billable services that Peer Support Specialists can and do provide.

4. Include in the State Plan the ability to grant site certification for peer-operated agencies to provide billable peer support services.

5. Address the concern that current practice of documentation for billing may not be aligned with the values and principles of peer support and a wellness, recovery and resiliency orientation. Develop an action plan to use CMS-approved recovery/resiliency-oriented language in documentation.

6. Investigate the options for broadening the definition of "service recipient" to include parents and family members of minors receiving services so that peer support services can be accessed more easily.

7. Convene a working group to develop buy-in and policies that will create consistency of practice regarding peer support services across the state.

8. Develop standards and oversight for the provider/entity that provides training of Peer Support Specialists. Allow for multiple qualified training entities that demonstrate infrastructure capacity that will allow for trainers with lived experience or by a team that includes trainers with lived experience.

9. Establish qualifications for who may supervise Peer Support Specialists by engaging with the Mental Health Directors to develop a policy that outlines key qualifications necessary for the supervision of Peer Support Specialists, with preference for supervisors to be individuals with lived experience and expertise in peer support. If capacity issues exist, supervisors could include qualified people who receive specific training on the role, values and philosophy of peer support. Define the specific qualities and skills within supervision that are required for the supervision of Peer Support Specialists. These skills should align with the values and philosophy of peer support.

10. Develop a plan to provide extensive and expansive training on the values, philosophy and efficacy of peer support to mental health administration and staff.

11. Develop a plan to ensure that

welcoming environments are created that embrace the use of multi-disciplinary teams that can incorporate Peer Support Specialists fully onto mental health teams.

12. Develop a policy statement that recognizes and defines the unique service components of peer support as separate and distinct from other disciplines and services in order to maintain the integrity of peer support services.

13. Develop a policy statement and plan that supports the professional development of Peer Support Specialists that allows the practitioner to maintain and hone his/her professional values, ethics and principles.

14. Craft a plan for funding the development of certification. Work with the Office of Statewide Healthcare Planning and Development to utilize state-wide monies from the MHSA Workforce, Education and Training fund and investigate other potential funding sources. Develop recommendations to fund components of certification such as financial assistance with training, exam and certification fees.

15. Seek representation on committees and workgroups that are addressing civil service barriers to the employment of Peer Support Specialists.

16. Work with Mental Health Directors to seek agreement on a desired workforce minimum of Peer Support Specialists within each county to more fully actualize the intent of the MHSA.

17. Develop state-wide models that can inform county leadership on the development of career ladders for Peer Support Specialists that begin with non-certified Peer Support Specialists and create pathways into management and leadership positions.

There are no designated funds to build on these recommendations and continue to develop peer certification in California at this time. Without ongoing funding the WWT Governing Board is discussing how to continue in this effort. We are hoping Peer Certification will be addressed in the [Office of Statewide Health Planning and Development \(OSHPD\)](#) next 5 year plan since there has been traction on so many other fronts including Career Pathways (see article to right).

Stay tuned for next steps!!!

State Creates Mental Health Career Pathways

In July, the [Office of Statewide Health Planning and Development \(OSHPD\)](#) formed a subcommittee to develop the following career pathways by the end of September, 2013:

- ◇ Psychiatrists
- ◇ Marriage & Family Therapist
- ◇ Clinical Psychologist
- ◇ Psychiatric Nurse Practitioner/ Clinical Nurse Specialist
- ◇ School Psychologist
- ◇ Peer Support Specialist
- ◇ Licensed Professional Clinical Counselors
- ◇ Alcohol & Other Drug Counselors

The subcommittee met on July 9 and 30. Members with expertise in one of the career disciplines above volunteered to lead in the development of that pathway. Sharon Kuehn leads the Peer Support Specialist pathway with support from Angel Galvez and WWT.

The public may attend the remaining meetings on August 20 and September 17, 2013 in person or via phone. All relevant documents and agendas, including the location and phone numbers are posted in advance at <http://www.oshpd.ca.gov/HWDD/WET.html> under the heading 'Career Pathways Subcommittee (Mental Health Focus)'.

Join WWT Monthly Networking Calls

...For people with lived experience working in public mental health:

Parent Call: 2nd Tuesday of each month, 10-11am, [1-800-914-3396](tel:1-800-914-3396)
Code 3970681, Email dvandunk@uacf4hope.org

Consumer Web Call: 2nd Wednesday of each month, 4-5pm
Register for web link at: <https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/rt/2855921328720867072>

Use free computer audio or call 1-909-259-0034, Code: 419-253-837. Email klettau7@gmail.com if you require a toll-free number.