

# PROVIDER BULLETIN

## PROVIDER INFORMATION



February 1, 2024

### Medicare Advantage Peer Specialist Benefit Specifics

Effective January 1, 2024, Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Minnesota (Blue Cross) is expanding the benefit set for Medicare Advantage subscribers to include a Peer Specialist benefit for members with specific behavioral health diagnoses. The following information is to issue clarity for providers on the peer specialist role & benefit specific for Medicare advantage.

#### Certified Peer Specialists & Peer Recovery Specialists Scope of Practice

Certified Peer Specialists provide non-clinical support to individuals with mental health or substance use concerns under supervision of a licensed mental health professional or certified rehabilitation specialist. Services they provide are drawn from their own personal experiences and can include:

- Social Connection that supports recovery.
  - Attends recovery and other support groups with the member.
  - Accompanies the member to appointments that support recovery.
  - Shares their own recovery experiences, models wellness, & resiliency.
- Connection to tools, resources appointments and care.
  - Promote the member's self-sufficiency, self-advocacy, and development of natural support.
  - Connects members to appropriate professional & community resources where needed.
  - Guides members to develop self-care skills to manage health conditions.
  - Provides education.
  - Supports the member's maintenance of skills learned from other services.
- Assist with developing recovery goals.
  - Identifies members' strengths and encourages their abilities to assist in goal attainment.
  - Works in collaboration with the member to create a self-directed recovery plan.
  - Works with other health care professionals to support members' goals.
  - Engaging members with strength-based wellness strategies.

#### Peer Core Competencies<sup>1</sup>

Peer core competencies were created by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) in conjunction with mental health & recovery communities to promote best practices in the delivery of peer services. Peer services need to meet the following core competencies: recovery oriented, person centered, voluntary, self-directed, relationship focused, and trauma informed.

#### Medicare Advantage Covered Services

- Individualized peer support to the member.
- Group peer services are eligible for coverage if hosted by a speaker with expertise on a topic which is being addressed in the group and the billed time is focused, in its entirety, upon education, skill building and sharing recovery experiences.

### **Medicare Advantage Non-Covered Services**

- Services are not covered while a member is admitted to an inpatient or residential facility.
- Group peer services that include recreational time such as group outings, movies, dinners, or other activities in which active educational content is not being presented for the entirety of the group session are not covered.

### **Benefit Specifics**

Medicare advantage members need to have an active diagnosis, current assessment, identified goals & documentation of services to begin and remain in peer services in accordance with state statute.

### **Peer certification & supervision requirements**

Mental health and recovery peers must adhere to training, certification and supervision standards found here:

- [Certifications & Training | Minnesota Peer Resource Hub](#)
- [Mental Health Services - Certified Peer Specialist Services \(state.mn.us\)](#)

### **Questions?**

Send an email to [peer.specialist.contract.support@bluecrossmn.com](mailto:peer.specialist.contract.support@bluecrossmn.com) or contact Provider Services at **651-662-5200** or **1-800-262-0820**.

<sup>1</sup> [Core Competencies for Peer Workers | SAMHSA](#)