

Support HB21-1021 Peer Support Professionals

Sponsors: Reps. Caraveo and Pelton

In the past two years, the number of Coloradans who didn't receive essential mental health or substance use services nearly doubled.¹ In 2019, Colorado's behavioral health workforce² only met 30% of the state's need. Peers support professionals can significantly alleviate the gap. Peer supporters are individuals in recovery from mental health/substance use conditions who help others experiencing similar situations.

Problem: Medicaid only reimburses peer support services in a very limited range of settings, which limits the scope of peer support services in other settings such as OB/GYN clinics and emergency departments.

Results of Peer Services:



Data shows that **peer support services cut hospitalizations in half, increase engagement in self-care and wellness, and decrease psychotic symptoms.**³



The Georgia Department of Behavioral Health & Developmental Disabilities found that using peer support services in treatment **saved an average of \$5,494/person for the state.**⁴

HB21-1021 would:

- Improve how peer support services are billed under Medicaid by allowing Recovery Support Services Organizations (RSSOs) to bill for these services.
 - RSSOs are organizations that provide recovery-focused services and act as an alternative billing mechanism allowing for appropriate oversight of peer-delivered care.
- Clarify peer support professionals can utilize telehealth in providing and billing for services.
- Include expectations for Managed Service Organizations to invest in the state's recovery services infrastructure.

For more information please contact Lauren Snyder, LSnyder@mentalhealthcolorado.org, 970.946.8029

¹ <https://www.coloradohealthinstitute.org/research/CHAS>

² <https://www.kff.org/other/state-indicator/mental-health-care-health-professional-shortage-areas-hpsas/?currentTimeframe=0&selectedRows=%7B%22states%22:%7B%22colorado%22:%7B%7D%7D%7D&sortModel=%7B%22colId%22:%22Location%22,%22sort%22:%22asc%22%7D>

³ <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/epdf/10.1016/j.wpsyc.2012.05.009>

⁴ <https://coloradomentalwellnessnetwork.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/CMWNPeerWorkforcereport.pdf>