

Clarifying Guidance on Peer Support Services Policy

May 1, 2013

This document provides additional clarification to the Peer Support Policy issued in the August 15, 2007 State Medicaid Director Letter (SMDL #07-011). The following information is to clarify Peer Support services' scope and access.

Per SMDL #07-011, "as States develop behavioral health models of care under the Medicaid program, they have the option to offer Peer Support services as a component of a comprehensive mental health and substance use service delivery system." Peer Support services can be offered for mental illnesses and/or substance use disorders.

In addition, the peer-to-peer support relationship is available to parents/legal guardians of Medicaid-eligible children (17 and younger). Specifically, the parents/legal guardians of Medicaid-eligible children can receive Peer Support services when the service is directed exclusively toward the benefit of a Medicaid-eligible child. Individuals providing peer support to the parents/legal guardians of a Medicaid-eligible child, per SMDL #07-011, "should be self-identified consumers who are in recovery from mental illness and/or substance use;" or a parent of a child with a similar mental illness and/or substance use disorder, or an adult with an on-going and/or personal experience with a family member with a similar mental illness and/or substance use disorder.

The individual providing peer support can perform a range of tasks to assist the parents/legal guardians of a Medicaid-eligible child during the recovery process. Activities could include, but are not limited to, developing formal and informal supports, instilling confidence, assisting in the development of goals, serving as an advocate, mentor, or facilitator for resolution of issues and skills necessary to enhance and improve the health of a child with emotional, behavioral or co-occurring disorders.

The August 15, 2007 State Medicaid Director Letter notes "peer support providers must complete training and certification as defined by the State. Training must provide peer support providers with a basic set of competencies necessary to perform the peer support function." Along with the State defined peer support training, States should consider training for these peer support providers that is specific to how to assist other parents/legal guardians.

All requirements of SMDL #07-011 must be met for peer support services to be reimbursable under the Medicaid program.

CMCS CONTACT: <Jean Close / 410-786-2804/ Jean.Close@cms.hhs.gov>