
SENATE BILL 5055

State of Washington

66th Legislature

2019 Regular Session

By Senators O'Ban, Hasegawa, Zeiger, Van De Wege, and Wagoner

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1 AN ACT Relating to increasing availability of peer services for
2 persons with behavioral health disorders; adding a new chapter to
3 Title 70 RCW; creating a new section; providing expiration dates; and
4 declaring an emergency.

5 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

6 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** The definitions in this section apply
7 throughout this chapter unless the context clearly requires
8 otherwise.

9 (1) "Authority" means the Washington state health care authority.

10 (2) "Peer support services" means services authorized under RCW
11 71.24.385 which are delivered by individuals who have common life
12 experiences with the people they are serving.

13 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** (1) The authority shall administer a peer
14 counselor certification program to support the delivery of peer
15 support services in Washington state.

16 (2) By July 1, 2019, the authority shall incorporate education
17 and training for substance use disorder peers in its peer counselor
18 certification program.

19 (3) By July 1, 2019, the authority must include reimbursement for
20 peer support services by substance use disorder peers in its

1 behavioral health capitation rates and allow for federal matching
2 funds, consistent with the directive enacted in section 213(5)(ss),
3 chapter 299, Laws of 2018 (ESSB 6032).

4 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 3.** To ensure an adequate workforce of peer
5 counselors, the authority must approve entities to perform
6 specialized peer training for peer counselor certification using the
7 state curriculum upon request if the entity meets qualifications to
8 perform the training as determined by the authority.

9 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 4.** (1) The authority shall cooperate with the
10 department of health to complete the sunrise review required under
11 section 5 of this act.

12 (2) This section expires June 30, 2021.

13 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 5.** (1) The department of health shall conduct
14 a sunrise review under chapter 18.120 RCW to evaluate the need for
15 creation of an advanced peer support specialist credential to provide
16 a license to perform peer support services in the areas of mental
17 health, substance use disorders, and forensic behavioral health. The
18 requirements for this credential must be accessible to persons in
19 recovery and:

20 (a) Integrate with and complement the attributes of the peer
21 counselor certification program administered by the Washington state
22 health care authority under section 1 of this act;

23 (b) Provide education, experience, and training requirements that
24 are more stringent than the requirements for the peer counselor
25 certification program but less extensive than the requirements for
26 licensure or certification under other credentials related to
27 behavioral health which are administered by the department of health;

28 (c) Provide oversight, structure, discipline, and continuing
29 education requirements typical for other professional licenses and
30 certifications;

31 (d) Allow advanced peer support specialists to maximize the scope
32 of practice suitable to their skills, lived experience, education,
33 and training;

34 (e) Allow advanced peer support specialists to practice and
35 receive reimbursement in behavioral health capitation rates in the
36 full range of settings in which clients receive behavioral health
37 services which are appropriate for their participation;

1 (f) Provide a path for career progression to more advanced
2 credentials for those who are interested in pursuing them; and

3 (g) Incorporate consideration of common barriers to certification
4 and licensure related to criminal history and recovery from
5 behavioral health disorders experienced by peers and accommodate
6 applicants who have these lived experiences to the greatest extent
7 consistent with prudence and client safety.

8 (2) This section expires June 30, 2021.

9 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 6.** Sections 1 through 4 of this act
10 constitute a new chapter in Title 70 RCW.

11 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 7.** This act is necessary for the immediate
12 preservation of the public peace, health, or safety, or support of
13 the state government and its existing public institutions, and takes
14 effect immediately.

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