

## Peer-delivered services

For people with mental illness and addictions, guidance and mentoring from peers – others who share similar experiences – is an important part of the recovery process. Peers provide a variety of services to these people and their families.

### What are peer-delivered services?

Recovery mentors and peer support specialists have personal experience with mental health and addiction challenges. They offer an array of services:

- Outreach – build personal relationships with people experiencing behavioral health challenges;
- Building community – support social involvement;
- System navigation – share problem-solving skills, help people plan for appointments, etc.;
- Recovery promotion – model a healthy recovery lifestyle.

### Who are peers?

A peer is one of the following:

- A person who is currently receiving or has formerly received mental health services;
- A person who is in recovery from an addiction disorder and meets the abstinence requirements;
- A person who is in recovery from problem gambling; or
- A family member of an individual who is a current or former recipient of services for addictions or mental health.

### What do peers do?

The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) recognizes peer-delivered services as a successful tool for treating behavioral health disorders. Using peer involvement in behavioral health treatment helps create better outcomes and reduces the cost of care. Peers work with people to teach them about available outreach services and treatment providers.

This intervention helps reduce the negative impact of a behavioral health disorder on a person's life. Peer-delivered recovery support, crisis intervention, and respite care services help people and families continue on the road to recovery.

### System impact

Peer support specialists provide services in all of Oregon's 36 counties, including 26 that have a community recovery center. For example, the Oregon Family Support Network works statewide to support families with children who have mental health disorders.

Youth M.O.V.E offers peer support services and training statewide to young adults who experience behavioral health challenges. In addition, more than 200 recovery mentors provide peer-delivered services to people with substance abuse disorders.

### What's changing?

Peer support specialists will shift from services focused solely on behavioral health to include physical health promotion for people and families who experience mental health and addiction challenges. The state can use Medicaid dollars to help fund peer support specialists and other traditional health workers.

### Peer-delivered services benefit Oregon

Studies show:

- When peers are part of hospital-based care, the results include shortened lengths of stay, decreased frequency of admissions, and lower overall future treatment costs.
- Peer-delivered services are an effective part of mental health care, and as part of a treatment team, show favorable results in both patient health outcomes and cost savings.
- For people diagnosed with both serious mental illness and addictions, peer-led interventions significantly reduce substance abuse, mental illness symptoms and crises.
- Those participating in peer programs are more active participants in their treatment and have better healing outcomes and greater levels of empowerment.

### How do peer-delivered services support coordinated care?

Peer delivered services' emphasis on a healthy, recovery-oriented lifestyle can help CCOs reduce hospital admissions and use of emergency departments for psychiatric emergencies, improve management of chronic conditions like diabetes, and reduce alcohol, tobacco and other substance misuse. This focus on wellness also helps increase engagement with treatment providers after hospitalization for mental illness and reduces overall health care costs.

### Where to go for more information

To learn more about peer-delivered services, visit the AMH website at <http://www.oregon.gov/oha/amh/pd/Pages/index.aspx>

### OHA state contact

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