

JAN 24 2024

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# A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO PEER SUPPORT SPECIALISTS.

**BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF HAWAII:**

1           SECTION 1. The legislature finds that the federal Centers  
2 for Medicare and Medicaid Services recognizes that the  
3 experiences of peer support specialists, as part of an evidence-  
4 based model of care, can be an important component in the  
5 delivery of effective mental and behavioral health treatment.

6           The legislature further finds that the federal Substance  
7 Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration identifies peer  
8 support as one of the six guiding principles of trauma-informed  
9 care. Peer support specialists use strengths-based approaches  
10 that emphasize physical, psychological, and emotional safety and  
11 create opportunities to rebuild a sense of control and  
12 empowerment.

13           The legislature further finds that research shows that peer  
14 support is effective for improving behavioral health outcomes.  
15 Benefits of peer support include reduced hospital admission  
16 rates, longer community tenure, increased social support and  
17 social functioning, decreased substance use and depression,

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1 raised empowerment scores, and increased engagement in self-care  
2 and wellness.

3 The legislature also finds that peer support provides  
4 benefits not only to individuals suffering from mental health  
5 disorders and substance use disorders, but also to individuals  
6 who are experiencing homelessness, involved in the child welfare  
7 system, survivors and responders of disasters, involved in the  
8 correctional and juvenile justice systems, and caregivers of  
9 youth involved in one or more child-serving systems.

10 The legislature also finds that Act 291, Session Laws of  
11 Hawaii 2022, established on a temporary basis the office of  
12 wellness and resilience within the office of the governor. The  
13 office was established to address the various barriers that  
14 impact the physical, social, and emotional well-being of all  
15 people in the State by building wellness and resilience through  
16 trauma-informed, strength-based strategies; and to support  
17 department and agencies in their individual efforts to address  
18 trauma-informed care and move toward a collaborative, shared  
19 purpose of collective system reform.

20 The legislature finds that by establishing a working group  
21 within the office of wellness and resilience that comprises  
22 state departments and agencies that engage with peer support

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1 specialists, community-based organizations, contracted service  
2 providers, adults, youth, parents, and caregivers with lived  
3 experiences, the working group will contribute to the  
4 development of a framework that will elevate the role of peer  
5 support specialists and enhance their ability to serve  
6 individuals in need.

7 The purpose of this Act is to establish a working group to  
8 develop and make recommendations for a framework for peer  
9 support specialists in the State.

10 SECTION 2. (a) There is established within the office of  
11 wellness and resilience for administrative purposes a peer  
12 support specialist working group. The working group shall  
13 consist of the following members:

14 (1) The director of the office of wellness and resilience,  
15 or the director's designee, who shall serve as the  
16 chairperson of the working group;

17 (2) The director of health, or the director's designee;

18 (3) The superintendent of education, or the  
19 superintendent's designee;

20 (4) The director of public safety, or the director's  
21 designee;

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- 1           (5) A member of the Hawaii state judiciary, to be  
2                   appointed by the chief justice of the supreme court;
- 3           (6) A member of the department of health's adult mental  
4                   health division representing the administrator of the  
5                   Hawaii certified peer specialist program;
- 6           (7) A member of the department of health's child and  
7                   adolescent mental health division representing the  
8                   administrator of the peer support specialist program  
9                   carried out within the division;
- 10          (8) The administrator of med-QUEST, or the administrator's  
11               designee;
- 12          (9) The governor's coordinator on homelessness, or the  
13               coordinator's designee;
- 14          (10) Two members of the nonprofit sector, who shall be  
15               invited by the chairperson; and
- 16          (11) A member from each of the following constituencies,  
17               whom the chairperson shall invite to participate in  
18               the working group;
- 19               (A) An individual with lived experience as a child or  
20                   youth in the child welfare system;
- 21               (B) An individual with lived experience in the  
22                   juvenile justice system or an individual with

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1 lived experience in the adult correctional  
2 system;

3 (C) Two caregivers with lived experience as the  
4 caregiver of a child or youth in behavioral  
5 health, child welfare, and the juvenile justice  
6 systems;

7 (D) An individual with lived experience with recovery  
8 from substance abuse and lived experience being  
9 homeless; and

10 (E) An individual with lived experience navigating  
11 the mental health system either as a child or  
12 youth or as an adult.

13 (b) The working group shall develop and make  
14 recommendations for a framework for peer support specialists in  
15 the State. The working group shall:

16 (1) Identify best practices and create, develop, and adopt  
17 a statewide framework for peer support specialists.

18 The framework shall include:

19 (A) Clear roles and definitions of peer support  
20 specialists, youth peer support specialists,  
21 adult peer support specialists, and caregiver  
22 peer support specialists;

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- 1 (B) Ethics, values, and standards required of peer  
2 support specialists;
- 3 (C) Recommendations on whether the State requires  
4 youth peer support specialists, adult peer  
5 support specialists, and caregiver peer support  
6 specialists to undertake the same training,  
7 certification, and credentialing process or  
8 whether the training should be individualized  
9 based on the type of peer support;
- 10 (D) Recommendations on how to require peer support  
11 specialists in state-awarded contracts; and
- 12 (E) An implementation and quality improvement plan,  
13 consisting of an evaluation plan with coordinated  
14 data collection and suggested metrics for  
15 assessing ongoing progress of the framework;
- 16 (2) Identify a trauma-informed model of supervision of  
17 peer support specialists to support competent and  
18 ethical delivery of services that support continued  
19 development of peer support specialist abilities and  
20 support navigation of state systems, including the  
21 certification and credentialing process, integration  
22 in decision making and program development processes,

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1           debriefing from meetings, training and technical  
2           assistance, and programs to support the well-being of  
3           peer support specialists;

4           (3) Provide an inventory of current use of peer support  
5           specialists within and across public and private  
6           agencies and departments; and

7           (4) Develop a sustainability plan to include  
8           identification of state and federal funding streams to  
9           include requirements to establish peer support as a  
10          medicaid billable service.

11          (c) Members of the peer support specialist working group  
12         who are employed by the State and serving in that official  
13         capacity on the working group shall serve without compensation  
14         but shall be reimbursed for reasonable expenses necessary for  
15         the performance of their duties, including travel expenses.

16         Other members of the working group not employed by the State  
17         shall receive compensation for time spent on working group  
18         meetings and related work and travel expenses.

19          (d) The office of wellness and resilience may contract  
20         with an administrative facilitator to provide necessary support  
21         for the peer support specialist working group in carrying out  
22         its duties.

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1 (e) The peer support specialist working group shall submit  
2 a report of its findings and recommendations, including any  
3 proposed legislation, to the legislature no later than twenty  
4 days prior to the convening of the regular session of 2025.

5 (f) The peer support specialist working group shall cease  
6 to exist on June 30, 2025.

7 SECTION 3. There is appropriated out of the general  
8 revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$66,400 or so much  
9 thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2024-2025 for the  
10 peer support specialist working group established pursuant to  
11 this Act, including for the office of wellness and resilience to  
12 contract with an administrative facilitator to provide necessary  
13 support for the working group in carrying out its duties.

14 The sum appropriated shall be expended by the office of the  
15 governor for the purposes of this Act.

16 SECTION 4. This Act, upon its approval, shall take effect  
17 on July 1, 2024.

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INTRODUCED BY: 

BY REQUEST



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**Report Title:**

Peer Support Specialist; Working Group

**Description:**

Establishes a working group to create a statewide framework for peer support specialists. Appropriates funds for hiring an administrative facilitator to provide necessary support for the peer support specialist working group in carrying out its duties and compensation for peer support specialists on the working group for time spent on working group meetings and related work and travel expenses.

*The summary description of legislation appearing on this page is for informational purposes only and is not legislation or evidence of legislative intent.*

JUSTIFICATION SHEET

DEPARTMENT: Governor

TITLE: A BILL FOR AN ACT RELATING TO PEER SUPPORT SPECIALISTS.

PURPOSE: To establish a working group to create a framework for peer support specialists.

MEANS: Enact a session law.

JUSTIFICATION: Several state departments and agencies utilize peer support specialists, by direct hire or through contract with community partners, to provide mental health and behavioral health services. Currently, there is no standardized statewide framework that addresses: the role of peer support specialists in our systems; a certification and onboarding process for peer support specialists other than the Adult Mental Health Division that utilizes peer support specialists; and a supervision and support model for peer support specialists. By establishing a working group to create a framework for peer support specialists that includes standardizing best practices statewide, state departments and agencies utilizing peer support specialists can streamline processes and break down barriers to expanding the role of peer support specialists within state systems.

Impact on the public: This bill will allow community partners who utilize peer support specialists for mental health and behavioral health services to have a clear understanding of how to navigate the State's system around certification, credentialing, and funding processes for peer support specialists.

Impact on the department and other agencies: This bill will require state departments who have been identified as working group members to meet and participate in

discussions to establish and implement a framework for peer support specialists.

GENERAL FUND: \$66,400.

OTHER FUNDS: None.

PPBS PROGRAM  
DESIGNATION: GOV100.

OTHER AFFECTED  
AGENCIES: Department of Human Services; Judiciary;  
Department of Health; Department of Public  
Safety; and Department of Education.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2024.