

## IN THE NEWS: Georgia’s Peer Support Expansion into Whole Health Coaches

On June 6, 2012, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) approved Georgia as the first state to have Medicaid-recognized whole health and wellness peer support provided by certified peer specialists (CPSs). Georgia’s newly approved Medicaid service will be delivered by peer support whole health and wellness coaches certified in Whole Health Action Management (WHAM), a training developed by CIHS that promotes outcomes of integrated health self-management and preventive resiliency.

The state plan includes the following CMS-approved definition elements.

<b>Goal</b>	<p>To ultimately extend the members’ lifespan by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promoting recovery, wellness, and healthy lifestyles</li> <li>• Reducing identifiable behavioral health and physical health risks</li> <li>• Increasing healthy behaviors intended to prevent disease onset</li> <li>• Lessening the impact of existing chronic health conditions</li> </ul>
<b>Interventions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supporting the individual in building skills that enable whole health improvements</li> <li>• Providing health support and coaching interventions about daily health choices</li> <li>• Promoting effective skills and techniques that focus on the individual’s wellness self-management and health decision making</li> <li>• Helping individuals set incremental wellness goals and providing ongoing support for the achievement of those goals</li> </ul>
<b>Technical Elements</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Requires professional supervision in accordance with <a href="#">CMS-SMDL #07-011</a></li> <li>• Requires a related goal(s) on the official treatment (recovery) plan</li> <li>• Requires health-related certification</li> <li>• Uses the WHAM training, which provides CPSs with six major skills to:             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Engage in person-centered planning to identify strengths and supports in 10 science-based whole health and resiliency factors</li> <li>2. Support the person in writing a whole health goal based on personal motivation and person-centered planning</li> <li>3. Support the person in creating and logging a weekly action plan</li> <li>4. Facilitate WHAM peer support groups which create new health behaviors</li> <li>5. Build the person’s Relaxation Response skills to manage stress</li> <li>6. Build the person’s cognitive self-management skills to avoid negative thinking</li> </ol> </li> <li>• Allows CPSs to provide the service with technical medical advice and referral support from behavioral health nurses, as necessary</li> </ul>
<b>Billing Detail</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• HCPCS (Healthcare Common Procedure Coding System) Billing Code: Health and Wellness Supports, H0025</li> <li>• Rate for 15 minute unit: Ranges from \$15.13 to \$24.36 depending on CPS experience/education and location of service</li> </ul>

Health-Certified CPSs will receive medical technical support from registered nurses and are trained to work in both behavioral health and primary care settings.

In this same CMS-approved state plan, Georgia has also developed Medicaid-reimbursed peer support services specifically for addiction recovery. This allows Georgia to expand its behavioral health workforce by using certified addiction recovery empowerment specialists (CARES) that function as certified peer specialists. This new workforce will bill Medicaid for peer support, with the addition of a substance abuse modifier, using Georgia's base peer support code. The service meets all of the CMS-SMDL #07-011 requirements for peer support. As this addiction recovery-specific workforce emerges, Georgia expects to also expand its whole health and wellness peer support through the use of CARES CPSs.

***Interested in learning more? Contact CIHS at 202.684.7457 for technical assistance.***