



OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

SEP 25 2020

To the Members of the California State Senate:

In my State of the State address delivered on February 19, 2020, I stressed the importance of supporting an individual's behavioral health needs as a top priority for my administration.

For this reason, I am signing Senate Bill 803. This bill supports statewide standards for behavioral health peer support specialists and adds these services as an option in Medi-Cal. Peer support specialists are people with lived experience with mental health and/or substance use disorders and are in a unique position to earn trust and build bridges for people on the path to recovery.

Statewide standards will ensure consistency and quality of service while offering a level of validity and respect to the position. Statewide standards will additionally satisfy a federal requirement to allow Medi-Cal billing.

It has taken many years and legislative iterations to get here. However, prior proposals have had prohibitive cost implications. The county opt-in model presented in SB 803 minimizes costs and allows a structure that is economically viable, while meeting the goals to expand the opportunity for peers to support resilience and recovery. I applaud Senator Beall for his leadership and persistence in this space.

Sincerely,



Gavin Newsom

