



# NORTH SOUND BEHAVIORAL HEALTH ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES ORGANIZATION

Provider Bulletin June 2021

## WEBSITE LINKS:

### Numbered Memorandum

<http://www.nsbhaso.org/for-providers/numbered-memorandums>

### Data Dictionary

<https://www.nsbhaso.org/for-providers/data-dictionary>

### Forms & Reports

<https://www.nsbhaso.org/for-providers/forms>

### Policies

<http://www.nsbhaso.org/for-providers/policies-and-procedures>

### Brochures

[www.nsbhaso.org/for-providers/brochures](http://www.nsbhaso.org/for-providers/brochures)

### HCA Customer Service

<https://www.hca.wa.gov/health-care-services-supports/apple-health-medicaid-coverage/apple-health-managed-care>

## Contact Us:

### North Sound Behavioral Health Administrative Services Organization

2021 E. College Way, Suite 101  
Mount Vernon, WA 98273  
360.416.7013 1.800.684.3555  
FAX: 360.899.4754

800.684.3555 x 617



[compliance\\_officer@nsbhaso.org](mailto:compliance_officer@nsbhaso.org)

## FEDERAL BLOCK GRANT FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

North Sound BH-ASO is receiving additional funding in Mental Health and Substance Abuse Block Grant funding. The COVID Supplemental Block Grant funding brings with it new service categories, such as supportive housing, First Responder Training, Crisis, and Peer outreach services. We will be reaching out to regional stakeholders to set priorities for the new funding, and a COVID Supplemental Block Grant funding survey will be released in July. The new funding/categories will not have an impact on current projects being funded through Federal Block Grant Funds.

## CERTIFIED PEER COUNSELOR TRAINING

The HCA Peer Program continues to train Certified Peer Counselors (CPCs) virtually.

Due to COVID-19 and the need for physical distancing, the Peer Support Program transitioned the Certified Peer Counselor (CPC) Training to a virtual format in May of 2020. The CPC trainings are continuing in the virtual format until further notice. The applicants for the CPC trainings are prioritized by employment need. Applicants who are working as peer counselors or who have a job offer as a CPC at licensed community behavioral health agency are given highest priority. Please see the training prioritization list below:

1. Working as a peer counselor or has a confirmed job offer as a peer counselor at a Medicaid funded facility.
2. Working as a peer counselor in any other agency.
3. Veteran or working/volunteering at any behavioral health related facility.
4. Working and/or shows higher than usual knowledge of recovery.
5. Not working or volunteering, qualifies due to eligibility.

If you are interested in becoming a CPC, please visit the [HCA Peer Support Application](#) for qualifications and directions on how to apply.

## WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES

The North Sound BH-ASO and the partner Managed Care Organizations recognized that a critical workforce shortage among behavioral health professionals is impacting access to care. Using some of the suggestions offered by providers at the May Integrated Provider meeting, the ASO and MCOs are identifying strategies where investments could be made at a regional level. For strategies that would best be supported by state-wide action, we are reaching out to the Health Care Authority who has also initiated a comprehensive plan to address workforce shortages.



# NORTH SOUND BEHAVIORAL HEALTH ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES ORGANIZATION

**Provider Bulletin June 2021**

We continue to welcome suggestions from our provider partners on strategies that could assist them with workforce recruitment and retention.

## **NEW FEDERAL BUPRENORPHINE PRESCRIPTION GUIDELINES**

In late April 2021, the US Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) released new guidelines around Buprenorphine (Suboxone) prescribing that are intended to expand access to Opiate Use Disorders (OUD) for persons seeking Medication Assisted Treatment. (see <https://www.samhsa.gov/medication-assisted-treatment/practitioner-resources> for more information).

Under certain conditions, the new Guidelines exempt eligible physicians, physician assistants, nurse practitioners, clinical nurse specialists, certified registered nurse anesthetists, and certified nurse midwives, from the certification requirements related to training, counseling, and other ancillary services (i.e., psychosocial services) under 21 U.S.C. 823(g)(2)(B)(i)-(ii).

Specifically, the exemption allows these practitioners to treat up to 30 patients with OUD with buprenorphine without having to complete certain previously required training. This exemption also allows practitioners to treat patients with buprenorphine without certifying as to their capacity to provide counseling and ancillary services. Providers are still required to submit an application designated as a "Notice of Intent" in order to prescribe buprenorphine for the treatment of Opioid Use Disorder (see above link).

Prior to this exemption, practitioners seeking certification to prescribe Buprenorphine were required to complete a training program and also be able to provide for counseling and ancillary services. This approach remains available and allows for up to 100 patients to be treated in that practice (again, see the above link for additional information).

After the release of this new exemption, the Office of the Medical Director at Washington's Healthcare Administration released a statement indicating that the Health Care Authority (HCA) had no additional requirements beyond those in the SAMHSA guidance document. HCA also felt that this new exemption would encourage more practitioners to participate in Medication Assisted Treatment as a way of creating greater access for persons seeking OUD treatment.