



STATE OF WASHINGTON  
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH  
HEALTH SYSTEMS QUALITY ASSURANCE  
*PO Box 47850, Olympia, WA 98504-7850*

July 26, 2023

Dear Tribal Leader:

I am writing today to provide information about the Department of Health's (department) rulemaking to establish two new behavioral health credentials.

In 2023 the legislature passed [Second Substitute Senate Bill 5555](#) to create two new voluntary credentials, Certified Peer Specialist and Certified Peer Specialist Trainee. The department will be collaborating with the Health Care Authority, partners, and interested parties to establish standards, rules, and other requirements for the profession. The Certified Peer Specialist credentials are expected to be available by July 1, 2025.

Currently, peer support specialists are an unregulated profession that functions more like a friend or coach than a traditional counselor. They have personal experience with a behavioral health issue – like substance use or depression – and then use that experience to counsel others with a similar struggle. They often work in coordination with professional counselors to help their clients receive treatment and assist throughout the process. Peers who choose not to become credentialed may continue practicing as they do now. Peers who do become credentialed will be able to bill Medicaid and private insurance for their services.

For additional information and to provide written feedback, contact Ted Dale, Program Manager, at [ted.dale@doh.wa.gov](mailto:ted.dale@doh.wa.gov) or (360) 236-2991.

For tribal relations issues, please contact the department's Tribal Relations Director at [DOHTribalRelations@doh.wa.gov](mailto:DOHTribalRelations@doh.wa.gov).

Sincerely,

Harold Wright, Jr., Executive Director  
Health Systems Quality Assurance

cc: Umair A. Shah, Secretary, Department of Health  
Jessica Todorovich, Chief of Staff, Department of Health  
Kristopher Holiday, Chief, Office of Strategic Partnerships, Department of Health  
Lacy Fehrenbach, Chief, Office of Prevention, Safety and Health, Department of Health  
Kristin Peterson, Chief, Office of Policy, Planning and Evaluation, Department of Health  
Candice Wilson, Tribal Policy Director, Department of Health  
Sasha De Leon, Assistant Secretary, Health Systems Quality Assurance, Department of Health  
Shawna Fox, Office Director, Office of Health Professions, Department of Health  
Ted Dale, Program Manager, Health Systems Quality Assurance, Department of Health



# PREPROPOSAL STATEMENT OF INQUIRY

## CR-101 (October 2017) (Implements RCW 34.05.310)

Do NOT use for expedited rule making

CODE REVISER USE ONLY

OFFICE OF THE CODE REVISER  
STATE OF WASHINGTON  
FILED

DATE: July 24, 2023

TIME: 8:44 AM

WSR 23-16-037

**Agency:** Department of Health

**Subject of possible rule making:** Creating rules for the new Certified Peer Specialist profession.

Establishing Chapter 246-929 WAC, Certified Peer Specialists. The Department of Health (department) is considering rulemaking to establish the new Certified Peer Specialist profession created by Second Substitute Senate Bill (2SSB) 5555 (Chapter 469, Laws of 2023). This rulemaking inquiry will consider rules regulating the new certified peer specialist and certified peer specialist trainee credentials. Topics that will be considered during rulemaking include, but are not limited to: application process, education and training, experience, scope of practice, continuing competency, and fees. In collaboration with partners and other interested parties, the department may also consider any other rules appropriate to establish and regulate the peer specialist profession.

**Statutes authorizing the agency to adopt rules on this subject:** 2SSB 5555 (Chapter 469, Laws of 2023)

**Reasons why rules on this subject may be needed and what they might accomplish:**

During the 2023 legislative session, the legislature passed 2SSB 5555 to create the new certified peer specialist credentials, to establish authority of the department and the Health Care Authority (HCA) over aspects of the profession, and to direct the department to begin issuing credentials by July 1, 2025. 2SSB 5555 also authorizes the Secretary of Health to adopt any rules necessary to implement the new profession, including rules on fees, forms and procedures, education and training requirements, scope of practice, equivalency with other states, supervised experience, continuing competency requirements, and appeal procedures. In addition to fulfilling the intent of 2SSB 5555, creating rules for this profession will allow the department to consistently uphold standards that protect patient safety.

**Identify other federal and state agencies that regulate this subject and the process coordinating the rule with these agencies:** Under 2SSB 5555, the department and HCA share authority over the certified peer specialist profession. HCA is granted authority over specific elements, including developing training programs and examinations. The department will collaborate with HCA as the rulemaking proceeds.

**Process for developing new rule (check all that apply):**

- Negotiated rule making
- Pilot rule making
- Agency study
- Other (describe)

Collaborative

**Interested parties can participate in the decision to adopt the new rule and formulation of the proposed rule before publication by contacting:**

Name: Ted Dale	(If necessary) Name:
Address: PO Box 47850, Olympia WA, 98504-7850	Address:
Phone: (360) 236-2991	Phone:
Fax: N/A	Fax:
TTY: 711	TTY:
Email: ted.dale@doh.wa.gov	Email:
Web site: doh.wa.gov	Web site:

Other:

Other:

Additional comments: Interested parties can participate in the drafting of the proposed rules. The department will be conducting rules workshops with interested parties and subject matter experts. The department will use the GovDelivery Peer Specialists list to inform interested parties of opportunities to provide input on proposed rule language.

To subscribe to GovDelivery, please visit [www.doh.wa.gov](http://www.doh.wa.gov), and select the "Subscribe" button at the bottom of the page. Please go to: <https://public.govdelivery.com/accounts/WADOH/subscriber/new>. After signing in, please click open the box labeled "Health Systems Quality Assurance." Next click open on the box labeled "Health Professions" and then click on "Peer Specialists." You may also check the box next to one or more of the other professions listed to receive information related to that specific profession.

**Date:** 7/24/23

**Signature:**

**Name:** Kristin Peterson, JD for Umair A. Shah, MD, MPH



**Title:** Chief of Policy for Secretary of Health