



November 10, 2017

**Re: Clarifying the role of certified recovery peer advocates, recovery coaches and interventionists for providers and consumers of addiction services**

Dear Providers and Consumers:

As the heroin and opioid epidemic has raged across our nation and throughout New York, addiction service programs and providers have sprouted up in every region of the state. While most of these programs and the staff that operate them are doing their work competently and within the bounds of the law, some are working well beyond the reach of their competence and with no legal authority. It is the duty and obligation of OASAS to protect the people of New York in need of addiction services; to assure that they and their families can make informed, rational decisions about treatment options and are not subjected to misleading information during times of increased vulnerability and stress. This letter will clarify the status, scope of practice and responsibilities of support professionals working in the addiction field – as employees of certified providers and/or as independent practitioners -- and identify the pathway for lodging a complaint against one of these persons if they act outside the scope of their legal authority.

**Certified Recovery Peer Advocates (CRPA)**

Certified Recovery Peer Advocates (CRPA) are individuals who hold an OASAS approved certification. In an OASAS certified program or other approved setting, CRPAs are supervised by a credentialed or licensed clinical staff member. CRPAs provide **non-clinical** peer support services as identified in the patient’s treatment/recovery plan and HCBS services identified in a patient’s plan of care. Peer support service is a face-to-face service provided by a CRPA. Peer support services are services to facilitate outreach, to engage an individual who is considering entering treatment, to reinforce current patients’ engagement in treatment, and to connect patients to community based recovery supports consistent with treatment/recovery and discharge plans. HCBS services may be provided to individuals enrolled in a Health and Recovery Plan (HARP) or plan members who are otherwise eligible for services and include services designed to initiate recovery, maintain recovery and maintain the quality of personal and family life in long-term recovery. Additional information on specific HCBS can be found at: <http://www.oasas.ny.gov/ManCare/BHO/HCBS.cfm>

Utilizing their recovery expertise and experience, CRPAs may also provide the following services:

- Developing recovery plans
- Raising awareness of existing social and other support services
- Modeling coping skills
- Assisting with applying for benefits



- Accompanying clients to medical appointments
- **Non-clinical** crisis support, especially after periods of hospitalization or incarceration
- Working with participants to identify strengths
- Linking participants to formal recovery supports
- Educating program participants about various modes of recovery
- Travel training - to use public transportation independently
- Engaging an individual to consider entering addiction treatment programs

**A CRPA is not authorized to assess, diagnose or treat addiction or mental health issues.** An OASAS certified or approved program may bill for peer support services provided by a CRPA. CRPA certification alone does not allow an individual to charge or bill third party reimbursement for services as a private practitioner. CRPAs shall not receive, nor be offered, any fee for the referral of a patient to treatment services from the program to which they refer.

Certification may only be obtained from either the New York Certification Board (<http://nycertboard.org/>) or the New York Certification Association ([www.nycertification.org/](http://www.nycertification.org/)).

### **Certified Addiction Recovery Coach (CARC or Recovery Coach)**

A **Certified Addiction Recovery Coach (CARC or recovery coach)** is committed to promoting recovery by facilitating a connection to recovery support services. Certified Recovery coaches approved by OASAS provide **non-clinical** supports and serve as a guide or mentor for people seeking or already in recovery.

A recovery coach provides a form of strength-based support for successful change when an individual is seeking recovery or self-directs their own recovery. A recovery coach may assist someone to access needed support services and systems, such as public benefits or health care.

Recovery coaches may also:

- Develop a recovery plan
- Help to initiate and sustain an individual/family in their recovery from substance use or addiction
- Promote recovery by removing barriers and obstacles to sustaining recovery
- Serve as a personal guide and mentor for people seeking, or already in, recovery
- Help individuals find resources for harm reduction, detox, treatment, family support and education, local or online support groups, or help a client create a change plan to recover on their own
- Help individuals find ways to stop using (abstinence) or reduce harm associated with addictive behaviors



Recovery coaches function as a guide to help with decision making and support steps toward recovery. **In an OASAS certified program recovery coaches are non-clinical support staff and may not assess, diagnose or treat addiction or mental health issues.** Recovery coaching is a peer-based service that is developed and provided mainly by persons who are in recovery themselves and as a result have gained knowledge on how to attain and sustain recovery.

A recovery coach is not the same as a CRPA and neither they, nor an OASAS program with which they may be associated, may bill for CRPA services, including peer support services, as defined herein and by 14 NYCRR Part 822. CARC certification alone does not allow an individual to charge or bill third party reimbursement for services as a private practitioner. A trained and qualified recovery coach may **only** charge a fee for services if they also maintain another license or credential under which they have the authority to provide and charge for treatment services. Furthermore, a recovery coach shall not receive, nor be offered, any fee for the referral of a patient to treatment services from the program to which they refer.

The New York Certification Board (<http://nycertboard.org/>) certifies recovery coaches that are approved by OASAS.

### **Interventionist**

An intervention is an opportunity to interrupt a person's destructive life patterns with a goal of helping someone enter treatment for their addiction and begin the healing process for the family system. An Interventionist helps to identify appropriate people to become members of the recovery support team for someone suffering from an addiction. The interventionist provides support, education, guidance, and direction as well as facilitation to the addiction treatment system; typically, they have received training and certification by a non-governmental organization. Persons seeking the services of an Interventionist should inquire about and verify the source of the Interventionist's credential.

An interventionist is not certified by OASAS or any other New York State agency, and OASAS does not approve any specific certifying entity. An intervention is not an OASAS service; OASAS does not regulate or oversee interventions. No OASAS provider may bill for an intervention service provided by an interventionist. Interventionists should not receive, nor be offered, any fee for the referral of a patient to treatment services from the program to which they refer (see Local Services Bulletin 03-2017).

### **Reporting and Complaints**

A CRPA or a CARC will have a certificate from either the NY Certification Board or the NY Certification Association identifying that they have completed the required training to operate in their field. Interventionists may have a certification and should be able to provide that verifiable information to you upon request.



**Office of Alcoholism and  
Substance Abuse Services**

**ANDREW M. CUOMO**  
Governor

**ARLENE GONZÁLEZ-SÁNCHEZ, M.S., L.M.S.W.**  
Commissioner

To file a complaint against someone with a certification, you must contact the certifying authority using the website information contained above.

To file a complaint against someone providing services listed herein and who is not certified or who will not provide certification information, please contact: [legal@oasas.ny.gov](mailto:legal@oasas.ny.gov).

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Robert A. Kent".

Robert A. Kent  
General Counsel