

To:	BHS Substance Use Contracted Service Providers
From:	Behavioral Health Services
Date:	September 10, 2025
Title	New Requirements for AOD Counselor Education – Implementation of AB 2473

The California Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) has finalized Behavioral Health Information Notice (BHIN) 25-029, which implements Assembly Bill (AB) 2473 (2022). This law establishes new core competency education requirements for Alcohol and Other Drug (AOD) registered and certified counselors, aligning counselor education hours with those required of Medi-Cal Certified Peer Support Specialists.

Effective Date

- Policy takes effect January 1, 2026

Key Requirements

- Registered Counselors with fewer than 315 total hours of AOD education must submit documentation to their certifying organization showing completion of 50 hours of AOD education to renew registration. Training must include topics in [9 CCR §13040\(a\)\(1\)–\(5\)](#) or those outlined in [BHIN 25-029](#).
- New Registrants (on or after July 1, 2025) must complete 80 hours of education (including core competencies) within 6 months of registration.
- Registrants between July 1–Dec 31, 2025 will become subject to the 6-month timeline on January 1, 2026. These individuals must complete required hours by July 1, 2026.
- For registrants on or after January 1, 2026, the 6-month completion window applies immediately.

Training Availability

- A free, asynchronous online course will be available beginning early 2026 through the University of California San Diego, sponsored by DHCS.
- This course will remain available through June 30, 2028.
- Counselors and providers will not be charged for this training.

Resources

- [DHCS BHIN 25-029 – AB 2473 Requirements \(PDF\)](#)
- [9 CCR §13040 – Core Competency Topics](#)

Please ensure your staff and contracted counselors are aware of these requirements and begin planning accordingly.

For More Information:

- Contact your Contracting Officer's Representative (COR)