



IDHW Background Check Variance for Peer Support & Recovery Coach Providers

July 1, 2021

Alert Summary: Optum Idaho will accept Criminal History Background Check Waivers/Variations issued by IDHW beginning July 1, 2021. Providers with Background Check Waivers issued by the IDHW Division of Behavioral Health prior to July 1, 2021 will need to take steps outlined in a forthcoming communication.

Dear Provider,

Peer-based services are provided by certified specialists who utilize their training, lived experience and experiential knowledge to mentor, guide and coach the member as he/she works to achieve self-identified recovery and resiliency goals. These services are designed to promote empowerment, foster self-determination and choice, and inspire hope as the member progresses through the recovery process. These specialists use their lived recovery experience from a mental health diagnosis and specific specialist training to assist adult members with defining their goals for recovery and developing a recovery plan.

Accepting the background check waiver/variance will increase access to Peer Support and Recovery Coaching services for Medicaid members, since some prospective providers may have drug- and alcohol-related convictions preventing them from obtaining a criminal history background check clearance. These prospective providers must receive a denial to their application for clearance prior to applying for a waiver/variance.

In accordance with the Idaho Department of Health and Welfare (IDHW) Division of Medicaid (Medicaid) Memo [Expanding Access to Peer Support and Recovery Coaching Services Through Variances and Waivers](#) issued on June 30, 2021, Optum Idaho will accept Criminal History Background Check Waivers/Variations issued by IDHW for Peer Support and Recovery Coaching providers for dates of service July 1, 2021 and after.

Agencies employing Peer Support or Recovery Coaching providers should include Background Check Waiver/Variance documentation in the employee's personnel file, as outlined in #34 of the Peer Support Site Audit Tool (Human Resources) and #59 of the Organizational Provider Site Audit Tool (Human Resources).

Optum Idaho will update the Provider Manual to include information on processes underlying Criminal History Background Check Waivers/Variations at the next revision.

Thank you,

The Optum Idaho Provider Relations Team