**Background**

Oregon's health system transformation and the federal Affordable Care Act have emphasized the essential role of non-traditional health workers in promoting health and delivering care. While many titles have been applied to these workers, state legislation has named Community Health Workers, Peer Wellness Specialists, Personal Health Navigators and Doulas as care providers in Oregon's non-traditional health care workforce.

Last fall, the Oregon Health Authority convened a stakeholder committee tasked with developing a public process to provide input on the draft temporary administrative rules governing certification and registry enrollment pathways for non-traditional health workers. The rule was created through a collaboration of stakeholders from throughout the community, including several representatives for addictions and mental health peer support specialists and recovery mentors. The draft rules were submitted on February 4, 2013. A permanent rulemaking process will begin after the close of the 2013 Legislative Session.

**Training, Certification and Registration**

To qualify for reimbursement by the Oregon Health Plan (Medicaid), non-traditional health workers must be certified by OHA through successful completion of an approved training program and enrolled in the state's central registry. With the exception of doulas, non-traditional health workers must complete 80 hours of training from an approved training program and meet required competencies to become certified.

Doulas can also be certified through successful completion of an Authority approved training program, or, if they have completed certification from a national certification program, they must complete six additional hours of approved cultural competence training to be certified in Oregon.

Upon certification, NTHWs will have the option to be entered into a registry. Only those NTHWs who have been certified by OHA through successful completion of an approved training program will be financed by Medicaid funds.

**Supervision and Medical Authority**

The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services authorizes financing of non-traditional health workers care under the supervision of licensed health care providers. Services provided by non-traditional health workers must fall within the licensed health care provider’s scope of practice. These providers include:

- Physicians*
- Certified Nurse Practitioners
- Physician Assistants
- PhD Psychologists
- PsyD Psychologists
- LCSW Social Workers
- Licensed Professional Counselors

*covered in the State Plan under physician services

**Financing and Reporting**

Federal approval and the State Plan allows for some flexibility for financing the work of non-traditional health workers. The following table describes financing and reporting guidance.
Peer Support Specialists

While not included in the NTHW rule, peer support specialists will continue to provide addictions and mental health services to Oregon Health Plan clients in coordinated and managed care as defined in the Integrated Services and Supports Rule (ISSR).

Next Steps

The Oregon Health Authority will begin a permanent rulemaking process at the close of the 2013 legislative session.

Additionally, to support training programs with employment opportunities, OHA is partnering with the Oregon Employment Department to conduct a survey of current and potential NTHW employers. A report of survey results will be available in early March.