HCAI CERTIFIED WELLNESS COACH REDESIGNATION POLICY

August 2026

OVERVIEW

The California Department of Health Care Access and Information (HCAI) administers the Certified Wellness Coach (CWC) Program, including the recertification, redesignation, and maintenance of certification status for Certified Wellness Coaches. This policy establishes the requirements and procedures governing redesignation for individuals holding the Registered Certified Wellness Coach (R-CWC) credential.
To maintain certification, R-CWCs must complete their remaining field experience hours within a two (2) year period ("Redesignation"). Applications submitted after this period are subject to additional requirements.

State Standards for Redesignation of Certification

- Certification redesignation is required within two (2) years of the initial certification date.
- Once completed, the registered designation is removed and is not required again.
- Certification is considered inactive if not redesignated by its due date.
- All applicants, regardless of certification type, are also required to recertify. Reference HCAI's recertification policy here.

OVERVIEW OF REGISTERED CERTIFICATION TYPE

Via the Education Pathway, individuals who complete a qualifying degree from a California college or university and meet the minimum eligibility requirements outlined below may apply for certification and receive the R-CWC credential:

- R-CWC I: Associate degree + a minimum of 150 supervised field experience hours
- R-CWC II: Bachelor's degree + a minimum of 300 supervised field experience hours

The R-CWC designation permits individuals to enter the workforce as Certified Wellness Coaches while completing the remaining hours required for full certification.

REDESIGNATION PROCESS

To remove the registered designation, R-CWCs must complete the total remaining supervised field experience hours required for their certification level:

- CWC I: 400 total hours
- CWC II: 800 total hours

R-CWCs must complete the remaining hours needed to reach the total required for their level within two (2) years of receiving the R-CWC credential.

For example, an individual with a qualifying associate degree + 175 hours of supervised field experience can apply for certification and receive an R-CWC I credential. They are required to complete the remaining 225 hours of supervised field experience (for a total of 400 hours required for a CWC I) within 2 years.

NOTIFICATION OF REDESIGNATION

The California Department of Health Care Access and Information (HCAI) will send several notifications of redesignation via email to eligible individuals beginning twelve (12) months prior to the due date. HCAI will use the email address on file. Revoked certifications are not considered in good standing and therefore are not eligible for redesignation.

The designation notification timeline will be as follows:

- 12 months before the deadline
- 6 months before the deadline
- 3 months before the deadline
- 1 month before the deadline
- 1 week before the deadline
- 3 days before the deadline
- 1 day before the deadline

REQUIRED DOCUMENTATION

To apply for redesignation, individuals must submit the applicable Supervisor

Verification Form confirming completion of new hours attained after receiving their initial R-CWC certification.

- CWC I: https://certify.cawellnesscoach.org/wp-content/uploads/CWC-I-Supervisor-Verification-Form-1.pdf
- CWC II: https://certify.cawellnesscoach.org/wp-content/uploads/CWC-II-Supervisor-Verification-Form-1.pdf

No fees apply for redesignation review or status updates.

SUBMISSION PROCESS

1. Individuals must download and send the Supervisor Verification Form(s) to qualified supervisor(s) who can attest and sign off on their new hours attained since receiving their initial R-CWC certification.
2. Individuals access the redesignation application through their existing California Certified Wellness Coach (CWC) portal account. Eligible individuals log in to the portal and initiate the redesignation process from their account, where they complete and submit the required information and supporting documentation for review.
3. Individuals upload the completed Supervisor Verification Form(s) of new hours completed to their certification portal.
4. HCAI reviews all documentation for accuracy and completeness.
5. Upon approval, the applicant will be informed of their successful submission, the "R-" prefix is removed, and the individual's certification type transitions to either a CWC I or CWC II.

CERTIFICATION INACTIVATION

Failure to complete redesignation requirements by the two-year deadline results in a status change according to the following schedule.

A. **Missed Deadline (Day 0)**
    1. Certification becomes Inactive.
    2. Employers may not bill Medi-Cal for services provided by an Inactive CWC.

B. **Within 30 Days After Deadline**
    1. Individuals may return to Active status by submitting verification of the hours needed to reach:
        i. 400 total hours (CWC I)
        ii. 800 total hours (CWC II)
    2. No penalty hours apply.

C. **More Than 30 Days but Less Than 1 Year After Deadline**
    1. Individuals must complete additional supervised field experience hours:
        i. R-CWC I: 100 additional hours (500 total required)
        ii. R-CWC II: 200 additional hours (1000 total required)
    2. To return to Active status, individuals must submit verification of both:
        i. The remaining original hours needed to reach 400/800, and;
        ii. The additional penalty hours required above (100/200 to reach a total of 500/1000).

D. **One Year After Missed Deadline**
    1. Certification moves to Expired status.
    2. Expired certifications cannot be reinstated.
    3. Individuals must reapply as new applicants to obtain a CWC credential again. They will be required to complete the full hours requirements + penalty to qualify for their new certification (i.e., 500 hours for CWC I; 1000 hours for CWC II)

CERTIFICATION REACTIVATION

Individuals in Inactive status must meet the requirements for their time window (0–30 days or 31–365 days after the missed deadline).

Once documents are verified, their certification returns to Active and they may again provide services billable to Medi-Cal.

MEDI-CAL BILLING IMPLICATIONS

Individuals in Inactive or Expired status may not provide services billable to Medi-Cal. Employers should verify certification status through the CWC Employer Search before billing.

FEE

No fees apply for redesignation, inactive-to-active review, or related processes.

SUPPORT

For questions, please contact the customer support team at certify@cawellnesscoach.org or call (503) 210-1334.

Appendix A

DEFINITIONS

- **Education Pathway:** The approved academic route through which an individual becomes eligible for CWC certification. There are two pathways:
  - CWC I: Completion of a qualifying associate degree from an accredited California college or university that includes 400 supervised field experience hours (application accepted with a minimum of 150 supervised field experience hours).
  - CWC II: Completion of a qualifying bachelor's degree from an accredited California college or university that includes 800 supervised field experience hours (application accepted with a minimum of 300 supervised field experience hours).

The Education Pathway determines the level of certification (CWC I or CWC II) and the total supervised field experience hours required for redesignation.

- **Expired Status**: A permanent certification status applied when an individual fails to complete redesignation requirements within one year of the deadline. Expired individuals are required to begin a new application if they wish to recertify.
- **Inactive Status**: A temporary certification status resulting from failure to complete required redesignation hours by the deadline. Services provided by individuals in Inactive status cannot be billed to Medi-Cal.
- **Registered Certified Wellness Coach (R-CWC):** A certification awarded to eligible graduates via the Education Pathway who meet minimum education and supervised field experience hours requirements, but have not yet met the full field experience hours requirements. These individuals are eligible to provide services as a CWC.
- **Supervisor Verification Form**: The required form documenting supervised field experience hours for redesignation.