

Submitter: EIAnya Nightingale-Warren
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Senate Committee On Health Care
Measure: SB514

I support SB 514 because I am a consumer who has experienced suicide in my immediate family. My youngest son took his own life, and we were left dealing the consequences all on our own. I believe that with an Adult Suicide Coordinator in position, it may have been easier to navigate the terror and trouble we experienced in the aftermath of his choice. I had to diligently search out support on my own. There were virtually no resources for assistance in our greatest time of need. Postvention was not in play and there was nowhere to turn to for help with the deep grief and pain following his death. I finally found a good counselor in the hospice arena, but it was very difficult, and I waited for more than two years before I finally found what I needed after searching and searching. I know how to advocate for myself, but what about all the consumers and their families who do not? What happens to them? We need this bill to go through so no one else must suffer the feelings of overwhelming grief and then abandonment from the system that should be in place to immediately assist those who have gone through such a devastating experience. And, as well, there needs to be a better way to get to someone who is suicidal to help them cope and, hopefully, survive. Maybe with more comprehensive and consumer-focused, state-wide system changes that this bill proposes, we can find ways to reach out to and support those who are struggling just to make it one more day.

I believe too, that a staffed advisory council needs to be well-rounded and should include representation of at least 20% Lived Experience membership in alignment with ORS 430.075. No one can understand the extreme emotional turmoil that accompanies the families of suicide victims, except those said families and those who have survived suicide attempts. Lived experience brings so much to the table and we should be given an equal voice in the concerns of these strategies to attend to those in need.