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House Bill 2445

In the 2023 Legislative Session, The Mental Health and Addiction Certification Board of Oregon (MHACBO), with the assistance of Rep. Rob Nosse, are putting forth HB 2445.

HB 2445 eliminates a redundant, bureaucratic process, which requires MHACBO Certified Recovery Mentors (CRMs) to be converted into Addiction Peer Support Specialists (PSS) and included on the Traditional Healthcare Worker registry for Medicaid Reimbursement purposes. This conversion process creates long delays for Addiction Peer Workers entering the workforce, as well as substantial administrative burdens for both MHACBO, the Office of Equity and Inclusion, and state certified SUD treatment programs.

MHACBO developed and established Oregon's first addiction peer certification and certification requirements in 2009. The Office of Equity and Inclusion began certifying peers based on MHACBO's requirements in 2014. The CRM through MHACBO and the PSS through OEI have identical certification requirements. Approximately 1,400 of the 1,900 addiction peer workers on the THW registry originated with MHACBO CRM certification.

This bill only targets Addiction Peer Support Specialists and has no negative impacts on the Addiction Peer Workforce. This bill does not take any control of Addiction Peer Support Specialists away from the Office of Equity and Inclusion, it simply expands Medicaid's ability to utilize Peer Support Specialists billing codes by now including MHACBO CRMs. MHACBO has no interest in certifying any peers outside of alcohol and drug addiction.

Medicaid currently permits addiction and mental health billing codes for MHACBO's 4,600 CADCs, 4,700 QMHAs and 2,200 QMHPs. The MHACBO CRM is the one exception.

The aim of this bill is to reduce workforce barriers, eliminate administrative burden, and expedite the turnaround time for Addiction Peer Workers entering the workforce. The OHSU Gap Analysis shows the entire behavioral health system is lacking by 50%, and with the combination of recently distributed M110 funds to Peer Support Programs, we are expecting a large surge of incoming Addiction Peer Workers. This bill paves the way for quick integration of peers into the workforce.



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