

Oregon Consumer Advisory Council (OCAC)

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COVER LETTER

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Oregon State Legislature
2023 Session
Senate Committee on Healthcare
Salem, Or 97301

Without leveraging my role or personal opinion as the current Chair of the State of Oregon (Mental Health) Consumer Advisory Council, please find here attached a resolution and recommendation recently passed by our Council . This is currently being sent out to all CCO's, Community Mental Health Programs, private contractors, and State administration. The vote for this recommendation was unanimous.

I hope this is helpful in your consideration of the amended SB 432.1 as the bill supports both technical and other assistance to the eco-system of engaged and skilled community of consumers who are interested in or are actively working to improve both their lives and the system of care.

It should be mentioned that an existing study from Michigan which has similar waiver interests as Oregon, have estimated the costs of standard service hour of support for example, peer-based drop ins and other networks of mutual self-help, is about \$8.50 per service hour.

Access to other community-based care, as in other non-licensed community mental health and peer supports are on a remarkable scale of providing up to 8 hours of flexible and choice based integrated services in the community for the same cost as only about one hour of case management or counseling in a fee for service brick and mortar style mental health facility.

Access to these wider supports and building the infrastructure back up for a wider community network for consumers would be helped exponentially by a centrally informed and administered peer technical assistance agency that was attuned to the efficiencies, practicalities, needs, and the assistance and help for individuals with advocacy, community based relationships, access to care, and mutual peer support.

Respectfully submitted,

R. Drake Ewbank (Electronically Signed)

Individually

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General Policy Recommendation to the state as well as CCO's, State General Fund recipients, and Community Mental Health Programs.

OCAC Policy Advisory Recommendation
Peer Run Drop In Centers and community networks
(Oregon's Original Evidence Based Practice)

Statement of Need

It is a well-known reality that persons exiting acute care as well as those simply living in the community are often isolated, have fewer socializing and support opportunities amongst their peers. This includes few chances to obtain work or volunteer positions amongst those that might have some idea of the challenges of being a labeled individual in the mental health system.

Recommendation

The Oregon Consumer Advisory Council Recommends that the State of Oregon and its Mental Health Division and its CCO's, contractors, actively promote, fund, and support Drop-in centers or clubhouses, consumer run support organizations in the community of various kinds, and mental health community networking support that brings peers together with other peers in the community in social and meaningful activities specific to, though not limited to. the consumer population.

Rationale

This recommendation is in rebuilding support of a service and support eco-system that once included as many as 34 drop-in centers in the state of Oregon. This population is now fewer than ten and few of those are "peer run or owned". Drop ins are known to measurably increase wellbeing of those in areas that they operate and include opportunities for individuals to establish themselves in a sympathetic and supportive community. This includes potential relationships with others with lived experience of the system and the mental health label

(peers). The Council recommends that the state and other related organizations use their influence and their financial and contracting means to support and substantially promote a re-establishment and revitalization of essential peer communities and networks, Drop in centers, and peer run and owned enterprises that integrate individuals into the society and establish lasting social support. These Drop in centers, consumer community networks and groups, and peer run projects are essential to maintaining a welcoming and stigma free social eco-system system. This eco-system can restore stable and healthy social roles and the potential for persons to establish themselves within healthy social networks, meaningful activities, and tasks that benefit others in similar circumstances and experience.

Additional Benefits to the Oregon Peer Workforce

These also serves the interest of informing and getting experience for folks in terms of support, engagement, and connection with others that can in fact work in the Drop in and similar environments. This additionally can enhance those entering the peer workforce and serve to give peers the opportunity to gain skills in relationships that are exceptional to any other treatment or therapeutic environment. This also matriculates those that get involved in dealing with the unique situations that arise when connecting with others, providing supports, and mutual self-help.