

SB 62

Testimony March 13, 2025

Senate Committee on Early Childhood and Behavioral Health

Good afternoon Chair Reynolds, Vice-Chair Anderson, and Members of the Committee:

I am Dr. Jacek (Jack) Haciaak, Director of DynamicChanges LLC. I am a retired Psychologist and administrator of mental health programs in four states, having managed Linn County Community Mental Health Services here in Oregon. I am also a person with lived experience of “mental illness” and its treatment.

I support SB 62.

The development of an independent consumer-run state organization as laid out in SB 62 would follow developing evidence about how direct consumer involvement helps human service systems become more effective. The State collaborating directly with a consumer organization created by SB 62 would replace the more common segregation of consumers into separate “advisory groups.” Such sub-groups for decision-making bodies end up being primarily tokenistic and affording consumers no real authority or power for affecting actual improvements.

Many academic study reports published over the past five years provide evidence of the benefits from directly including consumers in system development and decision-making. Two specific areas in mental health to benefit have been outcome measurement and services development.

With outcome measurement, we unfortunately measure mental health service success focusing primarily on system efficiency improvements and reducing the use of costly post-crisis hospitalization services, legal incarceration, and judicial resources. More importantly, we need to measure the actual system facilitation of individual consumers’ healing, resiliency, and personal growth. Facilitating these outcomes will inevitably then produce the desired reduction in dangerous crises, system congestion, and costs. To

also help accurately measure this cause and effect dynamic, lived experience researchers have been contributing more descriptive research methods, such as Community-Based Participatory Research, which more helpfully details these dynamics.

For service development, consumers have been directly instrumental in developing effective services that attract and sustain consumers' voluntary engagement and prevent crises from developing to intense levels. These services have been created, implemented, and researched based on consumer's knowledge of what truly helps heal, and keeps us well. Intentional Peer Support, Emotional CPR, Peer-run Respite, and Warmlines for example, have been shown to prevent dangerous crises from developing and maintain wellness. People do not run away from these healing processes.

So, how do we adjust the system so that it focuses more directly on the healing and growth of individuals? By having those who actually know what has helped them heal be empowered to guide professionals and system managers toward more effective applications of the professionals' technical knowledge and skills. The development of an independent consumer-run organization as SB 62 would lead to these benefits.

Please pass SB 62 and move it on toward full passage.

Thank you.

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--- We all need each other

Transformational Community Engagement to Advance Health Equity
<https://www.rwjf.org/en/insights/our-research/2023/01/transformational-community-engagement-to-advance-health-equity.html>

Veldmeijer, L., Terlouw, G., Van Os, J., Van Dijk, O., Van't Veer, J., & Boonstra, N. (2023). The involvement of service users and people with lived experience in mental health care innovation through design: systematic review. *JMIR mental health*, 10, e46590.