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Testimony in Support of SB707

March 5, 2019

Good afternoon, Honorable Chair Sen. Gelser and Committee Members:

My name is Laura Rose Misaras.

I am in support of SB707 which would put the Oregon Alliance to Prevent Suicide into statute for Oregon.

I am a survivor, a parent, and a consumer and family advocate for individuals and families, all ages. I have served on the Alliance for several years, as well as on the Oregon Consumer Advisory Council and the Children's System Advisory Council. This Alliance brings together people who serve in a variety of roles addressing this topic across Oregon's landscape of communities, geography, populations, and systems at many levels. The collaboration has been tremendous for implementing Oregon's initial 5-year plan addressing youth suicide. My participation in the Alliance has afforded greater networking, resources, and appreciation of the depth and breadth of system components to navigate and leverage addressing our current crisis. The Alliance has helped me become a more informed and effective advocate.

As different opportunities arise in communities across Oregon, I share the work of the Alliance and it has brought an additional measure of hope to parents and people impacted by this issue. After years of advocating individually, it is a relief that we are beginning to see more benefits and results realized by way of greater coordination and communication with families and providers in the local high schools, improved and informed community and media response following completed youth suicide, pilot programs with peer support at hospital emergency departments, etc.

I was thrilled to finally see the print edition of the folder developed [Advocating for your loved one during a crisis: A guide for parents and caregivers while at the hospital emergency department](#), pictured on the right, which was conceptualized, drafted, and edited with the input of stakeholders with firsthand lived experience addressing gaps of information and support when addressing their loved ones' mental health crises at hospital emergency departments. There is a link to the materials online and hopefully it will be distributed and made available in Oregon's hospitals and other relevant settings.

The voice of people with lived experience on the Alliance is a vital and grounding component. Work is underway to further elevate the voice of attempt and loss survivors, including young adults and family members / caregivers, providing input at each stage of implementation. Feedback from those who have been through the trenches on the ground level navigating, accessing, encountering, coping and advocating is critical to prevention.

I am committed to serve and support the efforts of the Alliance and ask you to preserve it in statute as there remains much work ahead.

Respectfully submitted,
Laura Rose Misaras

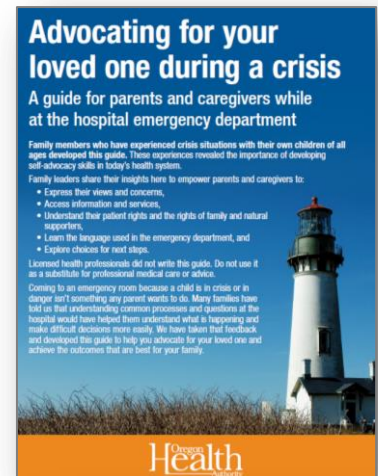


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