

5/24/2021

RE: House BH Committee Public Hearing / Support for SB721-1

Dear Chair Rep. Sanchez, Co-Chairs Rep. Moore-Green and Rep. Nosse:

I would like to express SUPPORT for SB721-1.

Though I am not here on behalf of any entity in any capacity except as a constituent, I will share that I have served on the Oregon Consumer Advisory Council (OCAC) which meets bimonthly 6x per year since early 2013. This council advises the Oregon Health Authority (OHA) with 15-25 member seats held by persons with lived experience as current or former consumers of mental health and/or substance abuse disorder services in Oregon. As seats open up, there is a process by which the membership committee informs outreach, reviews and scores applications, and brings recommendations for membership to the Full Council for a vote. Upon approval, such recommendations go to the Director of OHA (or designee) and the response turnaround is generally sixty (60) days, aligning with bimonthly scheduled meetings. Upon approval, new members are appointed to the council.

On this council dedicated members bring forward consumer voice and perspective from communities and cultures across Oregon, across the lifespan from young adults in transition and up, rural and urban, having various lived experience. This council provides two-way time-sensitive input and feedback to OHA and members' respective networks and communities at the local / ground level on what's working, what's not working, what can and is being done to address issues, leveraging best practices and insights, culturally responsive and trauma informed care. These efforts inform priority setting for public policy, budgeting and decision-making on matters including but not limited to: funding for community based behavioral health services, CCO contract language, performance measurement, workforce needs, health disparities and equity issues, trauma informed care needs, provider education, digital health literacy, and much more. This council raised awareness of peer respite and peer telehealth pre-COVID, advocated for an Office of Consumer Activities (OCA), and identified needs and more related to street outreach by peer support specialists with persons experiencing houselessness. These are just a few examples of many topics addressed.

I would like to call attention to the importance of item 6 where it says in the -1 amendment:

The authority shall provide administrative support to the council.

Administrative support is critical to the success of the council. For example, coordinating the meeting platform affording equitable access for participation by people across the state, by phone and/or video; inviting and coordinating with leadership and keypersons at the agency; posting timely agendas, minutes and handouts to the website, and more.

Finally, I would also like to inquire and comment regarding the language update to substance use disorder from addiction(s). This council has addressed problem gambling and other behavioral health and addiction topics beyond substance use disorder. I believe those needs are important to address and we would not want to lose that.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

L Misaras, Resident