



Testimony in support of HB 2445 – Peer support specialist certification

February 15, 2023

Dear Chair Nosse, Vice Chairs Goodwin and Nelson, Members of the Committee,

On behalf of the Association of Oregon Community Mental Health Programs (AOCMHP), representing CMHPs statewide, who manage the local behavioral health safety net in their communities and provide a wide array of services for people who are Medicaid eligible, uninsured or underinsured, I am expressing our strong support for HB 2445, to allow an independent behavioral health certification entity to certify qualified peer support specialists to provide addiction support services for members of coordinated care organizations.

Community mental health programs employ and contract with peer support specialists to provide essential support services for the public behavioral health system. We urgently need peer support specialists to support people with substance use disorders who are involved in the criminal justice system and to provide mobile crisis and crisis stabilization services, to name a couple of areas with extreme workforce shortages.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of HB 2445 to enable the public behavioral health system to increase the number of peer support specialists in order to expand capacity to serve people with substance use disorders.

Sincerely,

Cherryl L. Ramirez
Executive Director, AOCMHP