

Submitter: Kevin Fitts
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Senate Committee On Health Care
Measure: SB432

Dear Members of the Senate Health Committee,

I am writing to express my support for Senate Bill 432.1, Supporting Oregonians Accessing Behavioral Health Services. As a consumer of Oregon Health Plan behavioral health services, I have experienced firsthand the difficulties that individuals face when trying to access these services. It is imperative that we expand consumer engagement and equitable participation in behavioral health services planning and policy development, and this bill is a crucial step in achieving that goal.

I want to emphasize that the Oregon Mental Health Consumers Association is the author of this bill, which was introduced into the legislature by our nonprofit organization. As a volunteer lobbyist for the association, I have seen the importance of this legislation and the positive impact it will have on individuals accessing behavioral health services.

The TA center created by SB 432.1 will increase consumer engagement and equitable participation in behavioral health services planning and policy development. It will provide guidance and support to help individuals navigate complex service systems, as well as train and educate individuals on the technical aspects of service systems and policy. Furthermore, the center will be led and staffed by individuals who have accessed behavioral health services, ensuring that their voices and perspectives are incorporated into decision-making processes.

Peer-run organizations also play a critical role in supporting individuals with behavioral health needs, and this bill will add resources to improve services and support for these organizations. It will help them better serve their communities and provide individuals with the necessary knowledge and skills to engage meaningfully in service planning and policy.

It is also important to note that SB 432.1 seeks to include individuals with diverse backgrounds such as being formerly incarcerated, of different ages, and from BIPOC communities, as well as those with dual diagnoses, veterans, and those from the LGBTQ2S+ community. This will ensure that all individuals have a seat at the table and their perspectives are valued.

In conclusion, Senate Bill 432.1 is a critical piece of legislation that will improve the quality and accessibility of behavioral health services for individuals across Oregon. I urge the Senate Health Committee to support this bill and make a difference in the

lives of Oregonians accessing behavioral health services.

Sincerely,

Kevin Fitts,
Volunteer, Oregon Mental Health Consumers Association