



National Coalition for
Mental Health Recovery

Dear Chair Patterson and Members of the Committee, March 1, 2023
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I am a board-certified psychiatrist, and a person with lived experience of recovery from schizophrenia. I founded the National Empowerment Center 31 years ago, and am presently Chair of its Board of Directors and Vice Chair of NCMHR. The NEC is a national consumer-run, federally-funded, technical assistance center which provides on a national level the functions proposed for a TAC in Oregon on a statewide level. I was also a member of the White House Commission on Mental Health (2002-3) and one of our central recommendations was to “Involve consumers and families fully in orienting the mental health system toward recovery.” The report went on, “Local, state, and federal authorities must encourage consumers and families to participate in planning and evaluating treatment and support services.” In the 20 years since the report was released, mental health consumers have played a major role in transforming the system from a maintenance, illness model to a recovery and community integration philosophy. We have shown the value of peer supported healing from even the most severe forms of mental health conditions. We have developed warmlines, peer-run respite alternatives to hospitalization, and primary prevention through Emotional CPR.

I am writing to encourage you to support Senate Bill 432-1 (with amendment 1). The behavioral health consumer-run technical assistance center established by this bill would have two main consumer engagement functions that would strategically advance truly patient-centered care in Oregon on different levels: (1) providing information,

outreach and training to consumers of public behavioral health services so they can learn how to find opportunities and be more prepared participants in policy and service planning meetings, and (2) providing training and consulting to grassroots peer-run service providers that need guidance on management best practices, constructive board development, and funding stream guidance

The consumer-run TAC would fulfill the recommendation of the White House Commission Report by:

1. Expanding consumer engagement and equitable participation in behavioral health service planning and policy development.
2. Add resources to improve services and supports for peer-run organizations
3. Provide guidance on how governmental processes work, as well as how to find and work effectively with other funding sources.
4. Be led and staffed by individuals who have accessed behavioral health services, leveraging their insights into accommodations and strategies that helped them achieve recovery.
5. Develop skills in advocacy and self-advocacy while coping with their own disabilities, trauma challenges, discrimination and stigma, and other diversity and inclusion hindrances. This could be done through training consumers in advocacy through NEC's Finding Our Voice program.
6. Offer ongoing recruitment, training, mentoring, and information to those who are interested in better understanding the jargon, acronyms, and how our services are organized before taking the next steps.
7. Provide crucial input and feedback from individuals who have experience in developing their own supports as well as using a variety of public services.
8. Include individuals with diverse backgrounds such as being formerly incarcerated, of different ages, and from BIPOC communities, as well as those with dual diagnoses,
9. Provide training to peers and all community members in Emotional CPR to prevent crises from developing and assist peers, family members

and all community members in assisting persons through emotional distress.

In short, by funding such a statewide, consumer-run TAC, Oregon could continue to transform its system and move forward from its rank by MHA of 50th mental health system in the country.

Handwritten signature of Daniel B. Fisher, M.D., M.P.H. The signature is written in cursive and is positioned above a solid horizontal line.
