

March 15, 2023

Chair Gelser Blouin and Members of the Subcommittee:

My name is Julie Chick and I am a parent of two teens, in Nehalem Oregon, and my oldest child experiences Down syndrome. I am also the Executive Director of the youngest Oregon Regional Family Network, the COAAST Network, serving the North Coast of Oregon.

We are in full support to recognize the Regional Family Networks in statute (SB 1016) which shows the value of peer-delivered support to families and the need to create communities where all families can thrive.

The Regional Family Networks (RFN) deliver peer support, allowing flexibility and full accessibility to families without any barriers, no diagnosis required, and no eligibility requirements. In rural Oregon, this type of resource is critical as system services can be extremely limited or spread out geographically and hard to access. The RFN can fill the void and offer important resources and support otherwise missed.

To date, the Regional Family Networks support 20 counties in Oregon, which represents 76% of the state's population. Networks cover vast geographic areas, urban and rural areas and support families from diverse cultures and languages. Collectively, these networks support more than 13,000 families who have children with I/DD.

Regional Family Networks have a collective purpose to help families plan for positive futures for their children by:

- Providing support, information, and referrals
- Helping families navigate challenging systems such as the DD and healthcare systems
- Wrapping families into a supportive and family-centered community of support
- Hosting and participating in community trainings and awareness events
- Providing leadership training and supporting families to engage in public advocacy

We respectfully request your support of SB 1016 to ensure that Regional Family Networks are recognized in statute as part of the intellectual/developmental disability services provided in Oregon. Thank you.

Julie Chick, Parent & Executive Director  
Oregon COAAST Network – Communities of All Abilities Working Together