

TO: Oregon House Committee on Behavioral Health and Healthcare

RE: HB 2239 Testimony

FROM: Tony Vezina, 4D Recovery

Chair Nosse, Vice Chairs Javadi and Nelson, and members of the committee,

My name is Tony Vezina. I am the Executive Director of 4D Recovery and the Board Secretary of the Mental Health and Addiction Association of Oregon. Additionally, I am a person in long-term recovery from addiction and a former resident of recovery housing. This personal experience is why I strongly support this bill.

HB 2239 safeguards public funds by implementing nationally recognized standards in the recovery housing sector. The National Alliance for Recovery Residences (NARR) is a national organization with 33 affiliate state certification boards overseeing more than 6,500 accredited homes. NARR establishes operating standards and ethical practices that ensure client welfare and administrative competency.

Oregon mandates accreditation from hundreds of third-party accreditors; this is not an unusual practice. For example, Oregon requires many professional credentials to be obtained through “accredited college degrees.” College accreditation is granted by a third-party accreditor, such as the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities.

NARR is endorsed and supported by several national organizations, including the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, the Office of National Drug Control Policy, and the National Council for Behavioral Health. The Legislative Analysis and Public Policy Association, in partnership with the White House ONDCP, developed model legislation for states to implement, which we adapted for Oregon in this House Bill.

The Oregon affiliate of NARR is the Mental Health and Addiction Certification Board of Oregon (MHACBO), a nonprofit certification board that has been operating in Oregon since 1977. In 2017, MHACBO was selected as the Oregon NARR affiliate and began voluntary accreditation with the support of recovery housing leadership. To date, MHACBO has accredited 170 homes, with an additional 30 or more pending approval.

This bill provides Coordinated Care Organizations and other payers with a simple and effective way to verify the legitimacy of recovery housing by referencing MHACBO’s housing registry. This process is already in place for MHACBO’s 17,000 behavioral health certifications. The accreditation cost per house is generally \$175 annually, with slightly higher variable rates for larger multiplexes. This fee covers the cost of MHACBO staff conducting inspections.

In closing, this bill codifies national standards in Oregon to safeguard public funding and standardize recovery housing practices, ensuring quality care. It is a practical and necessary step for the legislature to take. That is why recovery housing operators, the Oregon Council on Behavioral Health, and several Coordinated Care Organizations support it—and we hope this committee will too.

Please vote **YES** on HB 2239.

Tony Vezina
Executive Director, 4D Recovery
Secretary, MHACBO