

March 25, 2024



Minnesota House of Representatives: Support of H.F. 4548

Thank you, Chair Noor, and committee members, for allowing me to testify today and thank you Representative Frederick for all your hard work on this topic.

My name is Randy Anderson. I'm a state licensed alcohol & drug counselor, a Minnesota Certification Board approved trainer and supervisor for peer recovery specialists. Most importantly I'm a person living in long term recovery and what that means to me is, I haven't used drugs, alcohol, or any mood-altering substance since January 9, 2005.

Overdose death rates continue to remain at unprecedented levels, and we are now losing more than 100,000 Americans each year. Minnesota stands out for its proactive efforts in addressing this crisis, focusing on prevention, treatment, and recovery options. However, like numerous states, we've witnessed the closure of several SUD programs, attributed to factors such as COVID-19, inadequate reimbursement rates for SUD services, and severe workforce shortages. Among these challenges, the workforce shortage is particularly alarming, prompting concerted efforts to develop effective solutions.

Fortunately, there's a rapidly growing workforce that shows promise in bridging these gaps: the peer recovery workforce. This workforce has witnessed remarkable growth over the last several years due to its proven effectiveness in aiding individuals struggling with substance use to find and maintain recovery. Many individuals enter the peer workforce as a means of giving back and bolstering their own recovery journeys. However, like many professions, this workforce is not immune to challenges. Frequently, both peer professionals and community members approach me with concerns, highlighting the critical need for clear reporting mechanisms.

Utilizing an Ombudsman for peer recovery services and that workforce would create a centralized point of contact for reporting and investigating concerns, which could greatly alleviate these challenges. Such measures would not only streamline the reporting process, it also enhances accountability and support within the peer recovery workforce, ultimately benefiting those seeking recovery services. Thank you for your time and attention on this important topic.

Kind regards,

Randy Anderson, RCPF, LADC

Person in Long Term Recovery

Est. January 10, 2005

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"The two most important days in your life are the day you are born and the day you find out why." – Mark Twain.