

Marcelino, Pamela

From: Susan Buchsbaum <sbuchsbaum2@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, February 02, 2017 9:59 AM
To: INSTestimony
Subject: Fwd: H.B. 6887: An Act Expanding Coverage for Mental Health Care Services and Substance Abuse Services

Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

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>> To the Esteemed Members of the Insurance and Real Estate Committee:
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>> I am writing to you today to seek your support of H.B. 6887.
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>> It is crucial that you support an expansion of insurance coverage for both case management and peer support services. I ask your support both as a person who has lived experience of mental illness and as someone who has worked as a patient advocate at Fairfield Hills State hospital, and currently works in a stipend position as a peer Recovery Support Specialist at the F. S. Dubois Center, a DMHAS facility in Stamford. I have been a client there for over 30 years. During this time, had it not been for the excellence of case management and peer support services received, I doubt I would be alive today.
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>> In my experience, there is nothing that can compare to the support of a peer with lived experience of mental illness and/or substance abuse. A person with lived experience has a special and genuine empathy that not even the best-trained clinician's can match. While working at Fairfield Hills, even patients with the most severe and chronic mental illness would flock to my groups. Why? Because they knew that I cared because I had lived the very experience they were living, and they trusted me. And now, when I work with clients at the Dubois Center, it is evident to me that clients who attend peer-run activities in the PUSH program return time and time again because they know that not only do the peer Recovery Support Specialists have lived experience of mental illness but that we are a living model of hope and recovery. Peer Recovery Support Specialists offer our knowledge, skills, and personal experience so that those whom we serve may improve the quality of their lives. It is a unique helping relationship that promotes respect, trust, and warmth that ultimately leads to the empowerment of the clients we work with.
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>> As you consider the merits of H.B. 6887 please consider that by requiring health insurance to cover the payment of services provided by Case Managers and peer Recovery Support Specialists, that you will not only be improving the lives of thousands of Connecticut residents, but that you will be doing so in a fashion that makes imminent fiscal sense, especially in consideration of the severe budgetary constraints faced by Connecticut.
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>> Thank you for taking the time to consider my testimony.
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>> Sincerely,
>> Susan R. Buchsbaum
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>> Stamford, CT 06902
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