

## Marcelino, Pamela

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**From:** Natacha Kerelejza <nkerelejza@advocacyunlimited.org>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, February 22, 2017 3:28 PM  
**To:** INSTestimony  
**Subject:** HB 6887 Testimony

Hello,

My name is Natacha Kerelejza. I am a registered voter in Meriden and I work for Advocacy Unlimited, Inc., a Connecticut non-profit. The following testimony is regarding Proposed Bill No. 6887 AN ACT EXPANDING COVERAGE FOR MENTAL HEALTH CARE SERVICES AND SUBSTANCE ABUSE SERVICES.

The concept of peer support is not new and has roots in experiences outside of the mental health and addiction world. As a non-clinical approach, peer support engages a relationship based on mutuality and connection related to life experience. When engaged well, this approach seeks to relate to others with authenticity. I support the development of this service, while expressing concern for implementing this service through insurance coverage.

As peer support has become a viable option for the mental health and addiction systems, there have developed models that seek to legitimize the benefit of this relational support. Often these models exist within traditional medical structures as an "add on" to existing clinical services, rather than offer a new approach as a separate experience. Coupled with the need to track progress, measure outcomes, and assess success, the health industry can easily lose sight of the inherent value of the intervention it seeks to promote.

In its current form, HB 6887 could impact the value of this approach and I look forward to further review of the potential of peer support.