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Subject: HB76 Senate Committee Hearing 3/17/25
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Attachments: [HB 76 Family Peer Support Certification- Public Comment Senate .docx](#)

Good Afternoon,

Senate committee hearing for Family Peer Support Certification has been scheduled!

The hearing for HB76 Family Peer Support Certification is scheduled for Monday, **March 17, 2025, at 3:00pm** in the Senate Public Health, Welfare, & Safety Committee room 317C.

A quick update on HB76's progress:

- HB76 passed the House Human Services Committee and the 2nd and 3rd readings on the House Floor.
- HB76 then moved to the Senate and was assigned to the Senate Public Health, Welfare, & Safety Committee.

If it passes in committee, it moves to the Senate Floor for 2nd and 3rd readings. If it passes those, it goes to the Governor's Office. And if the Governor signs it, HB76 becomes law!

During the upcoming Senate committee meeting, there will be an opportunity for public comment. Because most legislators will not have lived experience raising a child with special healthcare needs and/or behavioral health challenges, it will be important for all advocates to present public comment regarding this certification bill. Families' voices need to be heard as well as providers who see the benefit of Family Peer Support.

That being said, the Senate Public Health, Welfare, & Safety Committee has heard **a lot** of bills. It is important our public comments are short and concise. We need to respect the Legislators' time and instructions:

- This committee has been giving **2 minutes** for public comment, and I've seen it shortened to 1 minute!
 - **Time yourself.** It is hard to condense your testimony to 2 minutes, but it is even harder to be cutoff mid-sentence and not be able to give your full testimony.
 - **Highlight** what you would say if you only had 1 minute.
 - If it has already been said, **do not** say it again.
- They have also asked that if you have written or typed your testimony to not read it aloud but give it to the committee to read. I know we all want our voices heard but sometimes they are better heard when the listener feels respected and can process the information at their own pace.
 - If you are in person, give your written testimony to the committee and only share your name, title or position, and support.
 - Remember to ask the chair before handing them your testimony.
- Watch HB319 hearing on 2/24/25 in the Senate Public Health, Welfare, & Safety Committee. This bill had a ton of proponents and many of them did not get to share their

whole testimony. Everyone's testimony is so valuable and it's important to know the best way to be heard.

- You can find the recording on <https://www.legmt.gov/>. Click "Now Streaming" in the upper right corner. Click on the "Calendar" tab, arrow to February, and click on the 24th. Scroll almost to the bottom and click on Senate Public Health, Welfare, & Safety Committee- Video. To the right of the video, click on the "Agenda" tab. Click on HB319 and it will take you to that part of the video.
- A few quick talking points you might find helpful:
 - Family Peer Support has been supported by CFHHS Interim Committee and HB 872 (BHSFG) Commission and **Gov. Gianforte allocated \$700,000 to Family Peer Support pilot projects.**
 - Family Peer Support provides support for early intervention, diagnosis, and treatment reducing the risk of substance use and improving health outcomes.
 - Family Peer Support provides support in communities across the state including urban, rural, frontier, and tribal lands.
 - Family Peer Support provides uninterrupted care during transitions, covers the gaps in services, and gives access to after-hours support reducing the use of crisis services.
 - State certification is important to assure professional standards are met and to protect the Family Peer Supporters and the families we work with.
 - In 2007, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) deemed peer support services to be an evidence-based practice. As of 2020, 28 states have certification including Utah, Colorado, Oregon, North Dakota, and Idaho.

There are three ways to submit public comment: 1. You can attend the committee hearing in person in Helena; 2. You can register to give public comment over zoom (IMPORTANT CHANGE- you can now register up to 2 hours before the meeting); and 3. You can submit public comment in writing to the committee PRIOR to the meeting. Zoom registration and submitting written comment can be done by going to <https://www.legmt.gov/> and clicking "Public Participation" in the upper right corner and following the instructions. You will need to sign up for an account if you haven't already.

As parents and caregivers, our stories are important and impactful, whether we had a Family Peer Supporter that supported us and was a lifeline for us, or if we navigated our child's care alone, how different having a Family Peer Supporter would have made that experience. Those of us who have provided Family Peer Support, it is important to share our stories of working with families and the positive changes it has made for them. Our stories are what legislators need to hear. I know that speaking to the legislature can be intimidating. Please reach out to me with any questions. I am happy to help develop and/or practice your testimony. If you plan to attend in person, let me know so that we can keep in touch in case anything changes. I have also attached the updated Public Comment Resource that was sent out in January.

Thanks,

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