

Dear House Healthcare Committee,

I am writing to you as a Peer Support Services Provider. In my role I lead our Community Center, which provides drop-in mental health peer support to 18+ individuals in Burlington, as well as our statewide Vermont Support Line, providing 24/7 peer support in the form of our warmline for Vermonters. I also serve as the co-chair for Alyssum's Board of Directors, Vermont's only fully peer run Peer Respite.

I participated in numerous stakeholder meetings alongside many other prominent stakeholders in Vermont where the proposed provider peer support certification program was designed. These meetings were incredibly thorough and provided folks many opportunities to participate with their voices and perspectives both verbally and in writing to ensure that the needs of Vermonters engaged in peer support were considered in the proposal.

I support the certification of peers in the state of Vermont as proposed by the stakeholders. It is past time for Vermont to treat peer support work with the respect and significance that it deserves. I also support this build as it is written in its current form.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Chris Nial