

1 TO THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES:

2 The Committee on Health Care to which was referred Senate Bill No. 195  
3 entitled “An act relating to the certification of mental health peer support  
4 specialists” respectfully reports that it has considered the same and  
5 recommends that the House propose to the Senate that the bill be amended by  
6 striking out all after the enacting clause and inserting in lieu thereof the  
7 following:

8 Sec. 1. FINDINGS

9 The General Assembly finds:

10 (1) The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) recognizes  
11 that the experiences of peer support specialists, as part of an evidence-based  
12 model of care, can be an important component in a state’s delivery of effective  
13 mental health treatment. CMS encourages states to offer comprehensive  
14 programs.

15 (2) Research studies have demonstrated that peer supports improve an  
16 individual’s functioning, increase an individual’s satisfaction, alleviate  
17 symptoms, reduce hospitalizations and hospital days, increase an individual’s  
18 satisfaction with treatment, and enhance an individual’s self-advocacy.

19 (3) Certification can encourage an increase in the number, diversity, and  
20 availability of peer support specialists.

1           (4) The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, more than 46 states, and  
2           the District of Columbia have created statewide mental health peer certification  
3           programs.

4           (5) Mental health peers in Vermont are currently providing  
5           individualized support, coaching facilitation, and education to individuals with  
6           mental health needs, in a variety of settings, yet no statewide scope of practice,  
7           standardized curriculum, training standards, supervision standards, or  
8           certification protocols are available.

9           Sec. 2. PEER SUPPORT SPECIALIST CERTIFICATION

10          (a) The Department of Mental Health shall initiate the next steps toward the  
11          creation of a statewide peer support specialist certification program, which  
12          may include the use of grant funds for a peer stakeholder-run process to  
13          develop consensus support for recommendations adopted by the Department  
14          pursuant to subsection (b) of this section.

15          (b) On or before December 15, 2022, the Department shall submit a written  
16          report providing policy guidance and recommendations to the House  
17          Committee on Health Care and to the Senate Committee on Health and  
18          Welfare for any legislation necessary to create the program. The report shall  
19          include input from:

20               (1) the Office of Professional Responsibility; and

1           (2) the Department of Vermont Health Access regarding the options and  
2           steps required to seek Medicaid funding for certified peer support specialists.

3           Sec. 3. EFFECTIVE DATE

4           This act shall take effect on July 1, 2022.

5           and that after passage the title of the bill be amended to read: “An act  
6           relating to examining mental health peer support certification”

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12           (Committee vote: \_\_\_\_\_)

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Representative \_\_\_\_\_

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FOR THE COMMITTEE