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House Committee on Health Care  
Oregon State Capitol  
900 Court Street, NE  
Salem, OR 97031

Chair Salinas and Members of the Committee,

I write to enthusiastically support House Bill 2831, which would expand peer respite services in Oregon.

Investments in the community mental health system over the past decades have tended to focus on crisis services and longer term residential care. While these investments have been important, it has left a "missing middle" in the continuum. Increasing services such as peer respite will help fill that gap, and provide a vital resource to those in need of short term stabilization.

This legislation also reinforces the fact that our behavioral health system must be consumer-driven. At Multnomah County, we have infused peer voice operationally through our Office of Consumer Engagement and continue to interface regularly with our Adult Mental Health and Substance Abuse Advisory Committee (AMHSAAC). AMHSAAC discussions have regularly focused on peer services, and this bill aligns with recommendations from the council, the recent HSRI Mental Health Analysis Report, and Multnomah County's legislative agenda to improve the Behavioral Health system.

Thank you for supporting this important piece of legislation.

Sincerely,

Deborah Kafoury  
Multnomah County Chair