



Protection & Advocacy Project

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House Human Services

SB Bill 2079

Testimony of Denise Harvey, Protection & Advocacy, Program Director

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Chairman Ruby and members of the House Human Services my name is Denise Harvey. I am a Director of Program Services at the North Dakota Protection and Advocacy Project (P&A). P&A is an independent state agency established in 1977 to assert and advance the human, civil, and legal rights of people with disabilities. The agency's programs and services seek to make positive changes for people with disabilities where we live, learn, work and play.

P&A supports the amendments related to the definition of mental health professionals as introduced by the Department. P&A and advocacy groups have made it a priority to advocate for the value and importance of peer support specialists for years. The work done by peer support specialists is integral to meeting the needs of individuals with lived experience. Peer support offers psychosocial support, teaches empowerment and increases continued engagement in the recovery process. There is a connection offered with peer support through listening and the sharing of lived experience that is unique to this program and is why this holds such an important place in the continuum of services for persons with mental illness. The acknowledgment of the this nationally recognized service as best practice by the department is greatly appreciated.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Denise Harvey

Director of Program Services

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