



Behavioral Health System for Future Generations Commission



Recommendation for
Consideration

The Behavioral Health System for Future Generations (BHSFG) Commission proposes the following recommendation for consideration: **Grants to Develop a Family Peer Support Pilot Program.**

Problem Statement

Montana families with lived experience raising children with behavioral health challenges too often have unmet emotional support needs. The unmet emotional needs of families and caregivers of children with behavioral health challenges can both exacerbate the behavioral health needs of their children and can negatively impact the health and well-being of families, parents, and caregivers. This can increase the risk of abuse, neglect, and crisis episodes of children with behavioral health challenges.

While many organizations and individuals across Montana provide peer support to other families and caregivers experiencing similar challenges, these efforts are often uncoordinated and exist in silos.

DPHHS can help expand access to Family Peer Support programs to help meet the needs of families and caregivers across Montana. In doing so, DPHHS can coordinate between families and caregivers of children with special healthcare needs—including behavioral needs—to ensure that these families have their emotional needs met so that they can provide effective care. Additionally, the Children, Families, Health and Human Services Interim Committee is currently collaborating with Montana’s Peer Network—a current provider of Family Peer Support programs—to introduce legislation that provides sustainable funding towards Family Peer Support programs moving forward. This creates an opportunity to potentially address a growing problem in Montana with sustained funding, DPHHS coordination, and ultimately, better results for families and the children they care for.



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Data and Information Sources

In a survey conducted by Montana’s Peer Network of 100 Montanans who had received Family Peer Support services, **100% of survey respondents** felt interactions with a Family Peer Supporter were **helpful or very helpful**.

This survey also found Family Peer Supporters can be cost-effective strategies to reduce healthcare spending while improving health outcomes. The results of the Montana Peer Network survey indicate that an interaction with a Family Peer Supporter **could save an average of \$132.60 per interaction** by reducing the likelihood of needing to see a medical professional. While these results come from a survey with a small sample size, they suggest that Family Peer Supporters could potentially help reduce health expenditures by preventing the need to see more expensive specialists and could contribute cost savings for the state of Montana and for Medicaid.

As a result of working with a family peer supporter, families and caregivers indicated that the quality of their lives, and the quality of their children’s care, improved. The following table shows that 94% of surveyed caregivers indicated that the quality of their lives improved, while 87% indicated that the quality of their child’s care improved.

Survey Question	Greatly Improved	Slightly Improved	Stayed the Same	Slightly Declined	Greatly Declined
Since having access to an FPS, I feel the quality of my life has...	54%	40%	5%	0%	0%
Since having access to an FPS, I feel the quality of my child’s care has...	49%	38%	13%	0%	0%



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Create a family peer support pilot program to help improve health outcomes for youth with behavioral health challenges and their families or caregivers. The state will award up to five one-time grants to organizations with a proven track record of providing family peer support services in Montana. The peer support services will focus on families with youth with serious emotional disturbance (SED) in need of behavioral health services. All grants combined will fund up to five family peer supporters for two years. Organizations may apply for one or more family peer supporters. Over the two-year period the grant awardees will track activities and monitor outcomes as defined by DPHHS.

- **A Family Peer Supporter** is someone who has lived experience raising a child with behavioral health challenges and/or special healthcare needs.
- **Family Peer Support** is helping another family who is currently raising a child with behavioral health challenges and/or special healthcare needs. Family Peer Support includes active listening, emotional support, help navigating systems, and connection to resources.

<p align="center">Place in Continuum (Projected Jan. 2024)</p>	<p align="center">BHSFG Priority Alignment</p>	<p align="center">Projected Cost</p>
<p align="center">Prevention Recovery</p>	<p align="center">Family and caretaker supports</p>	<p align="center">\$700,000</p>

Impact	
Outcomes and Outputs	Implementation Activities and Milestones
<p>Target Outcomes</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Increased number of connections between families with children with behavioral health needs. 2. Improved mental health and well-being of both families of children with behavioral health needs as well as the children themselves. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Develop grant application. 2. Conduct outreach to potential providers to build interest in grant. 3. Review applications and select awardees. 4. Distribute funds to awardees and monitor their progress as



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<p>3. Improved uninterrupted care during transitions.</p> <p>4. Improved systems navigation through development of navigation resources for families with youth with serious emotional disturbances.</p> <p>Target Outputs</p> <p>1. Increased capacity in behavioral health system for family peer support services.</p> <p>2. Increased number of families with youth requiring behavioral health services receiving family peer support.</p> <p>3. Development of resources for families of youth receiving behavioral health services, including resource guides and system navigation tools.</p>	<p>measured towards their applications.</p>
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Supporting Material: Example Program Budget*

The following table shows an estimated budget for two years of implementation of the designed NTI. The budget estimates paying for five family peer supporters including base wage, fringe, and allowance for training, travel, and operating expenses.

Grant Activities	Year 1	Year 2	Total
Personnel (Includes wages and fringe benefits up to \$65,000 per peer supporter)	\$325,000	\$325,000	\$650,000
Allowance for Training, Travel, and Other Expenses (Up to \$5,000 per grantee)	\$25,000	\$25,000	\$50,000
Total Grant Budget	\$350,000	\$350,000	\$700,000

*For example purposes only.



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Supporting Material: *Example Grant Criteria**

To be eligible to apply for the grant, service providers must complete an application outlining their experience providing and monitoring family peer support within Montana. Provider organizations must commit to the following:

- Serving families who are raising children under the age of 21 who require behavioral health services.
- Hiring family peer supporter(s) dedicated to this project.
- Adhering to evidence-based and/or evidence-informed family peer support models.
- Initial and ongoing training and oversight of the family peer supporter(s).
- Maintaining and tracking services for a two-year period.
- Monitoring and reporting outcomes for a two-year period.
- Administering satisfaction surveys to all families served.

Example of criteria for families to receive family peer support:

To be eligible to participate in the program, the family must have a youth who:

- Is under the age of 21.
- Has a Serious Emotional Disturbance (SED) as defined in the Children's Mental Health Bureau Medicaid Services Provider Manual.
- Requires behavioral health treatment.
- Additionally, as a result of the youth's behavioral health condition, the family must benefit from family peer support services through demonstrating need for emotional support, connection to community, or assistance in finding resources and navigating systems.

*For example purposes only.

Oversight and Grant Management

BHDD staff will oversee the grant management and monitoring of grant deliverables. DPHHS will verify that grantee(s) meets service requirements.

Provider organization will be required to:

- track activities;
- monitor outcomes through administering surveys to members served and other activities;
- report individual members served; and
- provide data (including reporting related to outcomes and outputs).