

Richard Willigar
Pir2Peer Recovery Center
LD 1714

Testimony in Favor of LD 1714:

An Act To Create a Sustainable Funding Source for Recovery Community Centers

May 8, 2023

Committee on Taxation
100 State House Station
Augusta, ME 04333

RE: Passage of LD 1714

Dear Senator Grohoski, Representative Perry, and honorable members of the Joint Standing Committee on Taxation:

My name is Richard M. Willigar and I am a Board member for Pir2Peer Recovery Center located at 2323 Medway Road, Medway, Maine. I am a resident of East Millinocket, Maine. Pir2Peer opened its doors in Millinocket, Maine in January 2020 only to be ordered by Governor Mills in March 2020 to close its doors due to the Covid pandemic that affected our entire country. In September, 2022, Pir2Peer purchased a larger building in Medway, Maine (20 miles southeast of Millinocket) that provides the organization more space to grow physically as well as provide more space for recovery meetings and services. This move also strategically located Pir2Peer closer to the interstate to better serve its area of service which is the entire Katahdin Region.

Pir2Peer is a beacon of hope and recovery in the Katahdin Region for those affected by substance use disorder as well as a source of support for those who are affected by someone's use of substances. Pir2Peer provides recovery resources, recovery coaching on a one-to-one basis in person or online, counseling services, NA meetings, AA meetings, Alanon meetings, faith-based recovery meetings, community-based programs such as our painting program, Bingo, telephone supports 24/7, and most importantly, a safe place for recoverees, their families, and friends. All services and programs are "no cost" to participants. Pir2Peer also runs a most successful community meal program entitled "Grab N Go" which provides a free monthly, hot cooked meal to anyone. This program is supported through grant and community donations and continues to be instrumental in fighting our Region's food insecurities.

Pir2Peer currently receives funding through a small state contract in the amount of \$50,000 which helps to cover mortgage, electric, oil, winter plowing expense, insurances, office supplies, mandatory coffee, meeting expenses, community programs such as paint night, Bingo and Grab N Go meals. Pir2Peer also provides help with transportation to and from our Recovery Center so that no one is left without recovery supports. Currently, it is a real struggle every month to meet our financial obligations and when something like "a pipe bursts (which it did this past winter)", it is next to impossible to find the \$1,000 out-of-pocket deductible to pay out prior to the insurance money being released to complete the repair project.

Recovery Center attendance is linked to enhanced income, employment, and well-being. Expanding recovery support services increases the economic successes long-term recovery brings to Maine as evidenced through the paying of bills and debts, repair of credit standing and paying state and federal taxes. Funding Maine

Recovery Community Centers also supports individuals with finding and sustaining long-term recovery, which in turn, helps mitigate the economic costs of Substance Use Disorder. Recovery Centers also lower crime and add to the statewide public health.

It is of utmost importance that LD 1714 be passed. Currently, our great State of Maine is experiencing more demand for recovery services than resources available to meet this need. Supporting recovery is a community responsibility as well as a state responsibility. Pir2Peer Recovery Center provides Regional support every day the doors are open offering a safe place for people in crisis, recovery supports and programs, assistance for people looking to rejoin the workforce and society, and supports for those seeking to sustain long-term recovery.

To fully operate our recovery community center along with the recovery supports provided as well as provide funds to grow these supports with staff support, Pir2Peer requires a minimum base budget of \$300,000.

Sincerely,

Richard M. Willigar

Board Member, Pir2Peer Recovery Center, Inspiring Hope For the Katahdin Region

2323 Medway Road

Medway, ME 04460