

Lenny Smith
Portland

Dear Senator Claxton, Representative Meyer, and distinguished members of the Health and Human Services Committee,

My name is Lenny Smith. I live in Portland, Maine, and I'm a person in long-term recovery. I've worked in the treatment of Substance Use Disorder for over 16 years now, in inpatient settings, aftercare, as a partner in a medical detox and in both Intensive Outpatient Program and Outpatient services.

I'm here today to say I stand strongly in support of Senator Maxmin's bill, LD 488, to open Recovery Community Centers in each of the remaining Maine counties not currently served by one.

A Recovery Community Center increases access to recovery for those who need it in many ways. First, they offer a tremendous number of hosted support groups, representing all paths to Recovery, from the familiar 12 Step fellowships, to SMART Recovery, to support for people on Medication Assisted Therapy, support for families and loved ones of those who suffer from Substance Use Disorder, and more.

They maintain volunteer-staffed Telephone Recovery Services. Maine's existing Recovery Community Centers fielded more than 18,000 phone calls in 2020. They offer Recovery Coach Training and Certification programs, sponsor stigma-reducing public events like Portland's annual Rally for Recovery in Deering Oaks park that show our Recovery community coming together at its best, and normalizing the idea that Recovery is a very good thing to be in for those who need it. They host fundraisers, live music, art exhibits from those in Recovery, and more.

I personally facilitated a support group for loved ones of those suffering from Substance Use Disorder at the Portland Recovery Community Center for The Family Restored, a locally founded non-profit serving the Recovery community, for several years. We have seen that one group expand to many, both instate and across New England as well. Our goal, post-COVID-19, is to establish these family support groups in every Recovery Community Center in the state.

The Maine Association of Recovery Residences has been hosted at the Portland Recovery Community Center since its initial organizational meetings. Operation Hope, the program initiated by Scarborough, Maine Police Chief Robert Moulton, was introduced to the local Recovery Community at the PRCC. The PRCC has even provided me with private space to organize or host interventions when needed. When any need arises, it seems, they are always there.

Maine is a large and sparsely populated state. We now have a sizable, vibrant, and tightly knit network of allied Recovery resources here in Portland. In other parts of the state, access to Recovery support is not as easy. The more we do to ensure the presence of Recovery resources in every corner of the state, the more Maine lives we can save.

Please vote in favor of LD 488. On behalf of the Recovery community, I thank you for your consideration.