



Legislative Fiscal Bureau

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TO: Members
Joint Committee on Finance

FROM: Bob Lang, Director

SUBJECT: Assembly Bill 455: Grants to Establish Peer-Run Respite Centers

Assembly Bill 455 was introduced on October 18, 2013, and referred to the Assembly Committee on Health. The Committee adopted Assembly Amendment 1 and recommended the amended bill for passage by a vote of 9 to 0. On November 12, the Assembly adopted Assembly Amendment 1 and passed the bill by a vote of 94 to 0. The bill was messaged to the Senate and, on November 14, referred to the Joint Committee on Finance.

As passed by the Assembly, the bill would provide \$125,000 GPR annually, beginning in 2013-14 for the Department of Health Services (DHS) to contract with a peer-run organization to establish peer-run respite centers for individuals experiencing mental health conditions or substance abuse.

BACKGROUND

Peer-run crisis respite centers are facilities that offer services to individuals in mental health crisis situations and individuals who need additional support to cope with a mental illness or substance abuse issues. The goal of each center is to reduce individuals' dependence on the mental health system, and to help them to avoid the trauma that often occurs during emergency room visits, inpatient psychiatric hospitalizations, or incarcerations. In this setting, support services are provided by individuals who have successfully completed mental health or substance abuse treatment and recovery programs themselves. Their experience enables them to relate with, and support as equals, individuals who seek services at these centers. Examples of services these centers may provide include support groups, one-on-one time with peer specialists, and therapeutic educational and recreational activities.

Several programs in Wisconsin currently provide some peer-run services for individuals with mental illness and substance abuse conditions. However, none of these programs offer residential services. The current programs, which are typically staffed by volunteers, are supported from several funding sources, including counties and federal funds the state receives under the

community mental health block grant program. In the 2012-13 federal fiscal year, DHS distributed a total of \$275,000 to 11 peer-run respite centers, with each center receiving \$25,000. The centers that received these grants are listed below.

**Federal Community Mental Health Block Grant - Funded \$25,000 Grants
for Peer-Run Respite Centers (2013)**

<u>Name</u>	<u>Location</u>
Horizons of Jefferson County	Fort Atkinson
Genesis 1990, Inc.	Ashland
Partners in Empowerment	La Crosse
Warmline, Inc.	Milwaukee
National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) of Washington County, Inc.	West Bend
Cornucopia, Inc.	Madison
The Friendship Connection	Friendship
The Gathering Place	Green Bay
New Directions 2000, Inc.	Rice Lake
Independent Living	La Crosse
The Wellness Shack, Inc.	Eau Claire

2013 Wisconsin Act 20 (the 2013-15 biennial budget act) provided \$1,200,000 GPR annually, beginning in 2014-15, to fund three regional peer-run centers, with each center budgeted \$400,000. In addition, DHS was authorized 1.0 GPR position, beginning in 2013-14, and \$64,600 GPR in 2013-14 and \$82,700 GPR in 2014-15, to administer this new grant program. These centers could either serve individuals with mental health or substance abuse conditions.

DHS has convened a Peer-Run Respite (PRR) Advisory Committee, which began meeting in September. Based on the work of this Committee, DHS will develop a request for proposal to award the grant funds authorized in Act 20. As part of its work, the Advisory Committee and DHS staff are reviewing some of the findings from the Grassroots Empowerment Project, Inc., which conducted 11 listening and dialog sessions with approximately 100 peers and consumers across the state in July and August of 2013.

SUMMARY OF BILL

As introduced, the bill would provide \$125,000 GPR annually, beginning in 2013-14, for DHS to provide grants to counties to contract with peer-run organizations to establish peer-run respite centers for individuals experiencing mental health conditions or substance abuse. The state grant amount would equal one-half the amount of money the county provides to contract with a peer-run organization to establish peer-run respite centers. For example, if a county contributed \$50,000 for the operation of a center in a year, the state grant amount would be \$25,000.

The provisions in AB 455, as introduced, differ somewhat from the Act 20 provisions. Under the bill, DHS would be required to distribute funding to counties to establish peer-run respite centers while Act 20 does not require DHS to distribute funds to counties, but instead

permits DHS to contract directly with organizations that can provide these services on a regional basis. Second, the bill would provide state funds in an amount equal to one-half of the amount a county contributed toward the operation of a center, whereas the Act 20 provisions do not require counties to contribute to the costs of the regional centers.

ASSEMBLY AMENDMENT 1

Assembly Amendment 1 would delete all references to grants DHS would provide to counties for the establishment of peer-run respite centers. Instead, DHS would be required to use the funding in the bill to contract directly with peer-run organizations to establish peer-run respite centers. In addition, the amendment would delete the provision that would require DHS to award a grant amount that equals one-half the amount of money the county provides to contract with a peer-run organization to establish peer-run respite centers. Consequently, the amount of any state grant would not be determined by the amount of funding contributed by a county.

DHS has indicated that this change would permit DHS to disburse the funding in the bill through the procurement process it has already started to administer the funding that was provided in Act 20 for regional peer-run respite centers. In this way, DHS would not be required to establish a separate grant program, or initiate a new request for proposals.

The amendment would not modify the purpose for which the funding would be used -- to establish peer-run respite centers. As such, the grant funding would not be available to supplant or supplement funding DHS distributes to support current peer-run respite centers.

FISCAL EFFECT

As passed by the Assembly, the bill would increase funding available to support the establishment of peer-run respite centers by \$125,000 GPR annually, beginning in 2013-14.

Prepared by: Charles Morgan