

S.1238/H.3602 - An Act establishing peer-run respite centers throughout the Commonwealth

Sponsored by Sen. Jo Comerford and Reps. Lindsay Sabadosa and Smitty Pignatelli



The Issue

People are stuck cycling in and out of the mental health system with a lack of real choices and alternatives. The result is inadequate care at high costs. People undergoing a mental health crisis are frequently traumatized by this inadequate care. The risk of harm is even greater for people who identify as LGBTQIA+.

The Solution

Set up a peer respite in each county in Massachusetts in order to provide support for people undergoing a mental health crisis, with two specific LGBTQIA-focused peer respites, one located in Western Massachusetts.

What Are Peer Respites?

Peer respites are safe spaces where people can stay in homelike settings for up to 2 weeks while they navigate through a mental health crisis. People undergoing a crisis are given non-clinical support offered by highly trained and skilled peer supporters. These peer supporters have lived experience surviving trauma, crisis, and a variety of life-interrupting challenges.

Advantages of Peer Respites

- life changing and life saving
- helps people break cycles
- high potential for cost-saving both in the short and (particularly) the long-term
- can play a key role in diverting people from ED boarding
- are proven to work - Afiya House has gained international recognition by WHO as an exemplary model of non-coercive response to emotional and mental health crises
- are also supported by the Massachusetts Department of Mental Health and the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration



