

Division of Mental Health, Developmental Disabilities and Substance Use Services

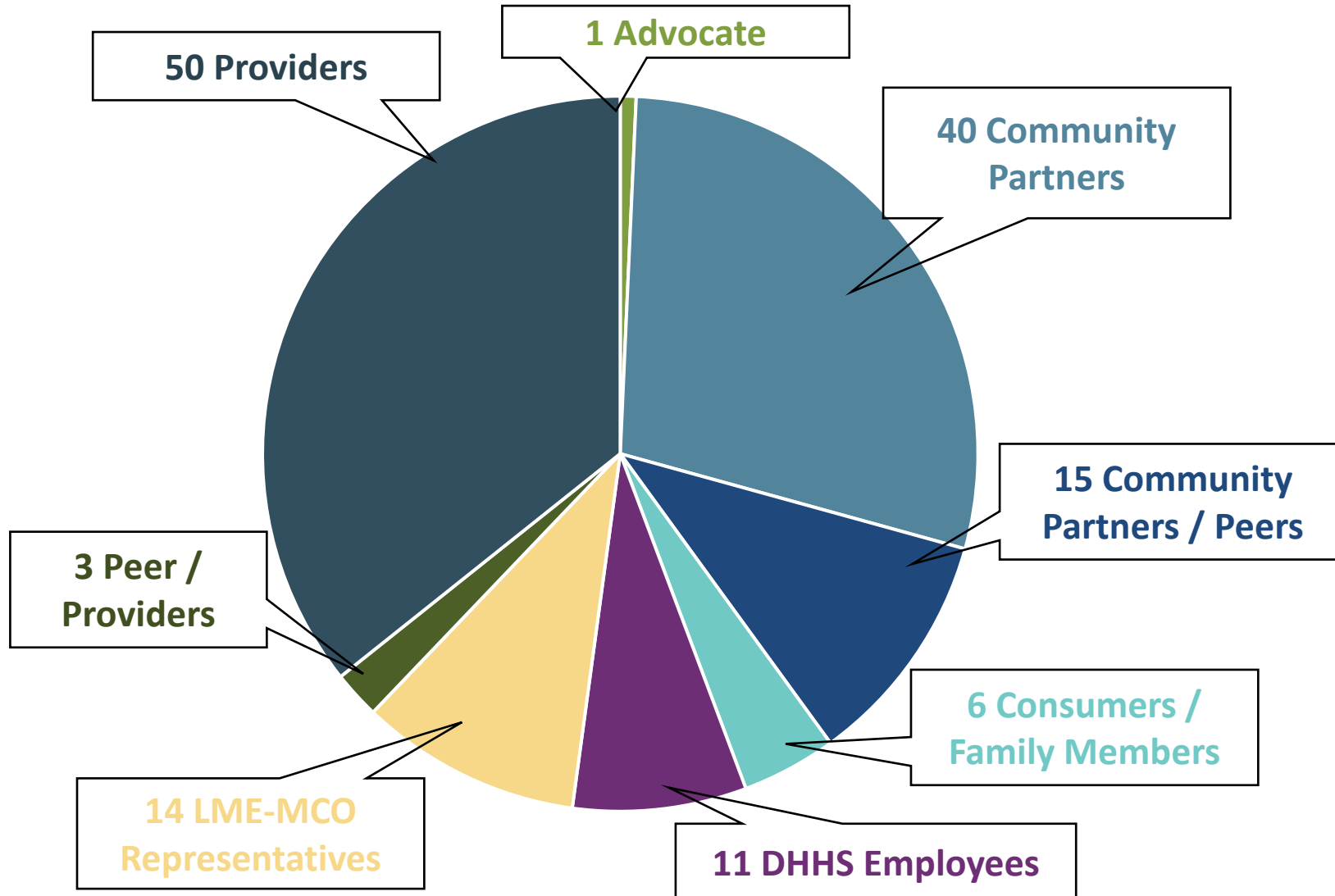
DMH/DD/SUS Advisory Committee: Peer Support Workforce

May 9, 2024

Agenda

- Recap Previous Advisory Committee Discussions
- DMH/DD/SUS Peer Support Updates:
 - Scholarship Program
 - Certification and Oversight Board
- Discussion: Establishing a Peer Support Center of Excellence

Peer Support Advisory Committee Membership



- The Peer Support Advisory Committee is comprised of 140 members!
- Please feel free to introduce yourself in the chat.

Recap: Previous Advisory Committee Discussions

DMH/DD/SUS has hosted five Peer Support Advisory Committee meetings, beginning in November, 2023. These meetings have resulted in rich discussion across a range of topics, described in more detail below.

November:

- Defining peer supports and providing an overview of peer supports in North Carolina
- Discussing DMH/DD/SUS goals to expand peer supports
- Discussion of successes and challenges in the current system of peer supports in NC

December:

- Discussion of current state and key challenges related to peer support certification, training, and professional advancement

January:

- Discussion of current state and key challenges related to oversight of peer support specialists, access to peer support services, and efforts to amplify peer voices

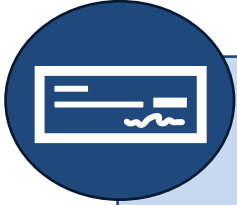
February:

- Discussion of challenges and proposed solutions to improving equity in peer supports and ensuring sustainable funding for peer support services

March:

- Proposed peer support certification scholarship program and feedback on key elements of the program

Update: Peer Support Certification Scholarship Program



Since the March Advisory Committee meeting, DMH/DD/SUS has made progress to develop a peer support certification scholarship program.

- DMH/DD/SUS aims to launch the program in late Spring/early Summer 2024
- Information on the scholarships will be available on the DMH/DD/SUS website, as well as the UNC-BHS website once the program is live
- DMH/DD/SUS will be meeting with certification course owners in the coming weeks to discuss the scholarship program in greater detail

Establishing a Peer Support Center of Excellence

What We've Heard: Workforce Challenges

In conversation with community partners (including this group) and internal partners, we continue to hear several key peer workforce challenges:



Employers are not prepared to integrate peer support specialists onto multi-disciplinary teams



Many peers are looking for work but are struggling to find good jobs



Peers need professional development and personal well-being supports throughout their career to support their career advancement and growth



DMH/DD/SUS needs better data collection and evaluation of the peer support program to inform future policy efforts

DMH/DD/SUS recognizes peer support wages are another critical workforce challenge, and is developing initiatives to address this challenge, in addition to the proposal discussed today.

Overview: Peer Support Center of Excellence

To support peers across their career path, DMH/DD/SUS proposes establishing a Peer Support Center of Excellence to partner with the Division across wide-ranging peer support workforce issues.

DMH/DD/SUS envisions that the Center of Excellence (COE) will:

- Be an organization that is the primary partner with DMH/DD/SUS in implementing peer support workforce initiatives
- Serve as a subject matter expert in developing policies on peer support certification and career advancement opportunities
- Manage subcontracts with a range of community organizations, educational entities, and providers to leverage their expertise in specific areas
- Support the Division’s engagement with community partners
- Hire people with lived experience on their team and model a culture of inclusion and equity
- Be chosen through a competitive process

Peer Support Center of Excellence Key Responsibilities

DMH/DD/SUS envisions the COE taking on several key responsibilities, either directly or through subcontracts with community organizations.

The COE's responsibilities may include, but are not limited to:

- Ensuring adequate **access to certification courses**
- Ensuring **access to continuing education and designation courses** as they are developed (e.g., crisis, justice-involved, I/DD, older adults, etc.)
- Offering **career supports**, including:
 - Helping peers in **deciding whether to enter the field**
 - **Job-matching and hiring supports**
 - Creating **opportunities for peer-to-peer connection** to support wellbeing
- Offering **technical assistance to providers and employers** about hiring and integrating peers onto care teams
- **Collecting data and reporting key program outcomes** to DMH/DD/SUS to inform future reforms

Discussion Questions

1. What other responsibilities should DMH/DD/SUS consider for a COE?
2. How do you imagine a COE could support you, or your employees?
3. What types of organizations do you think would be an effective COE (e.g., non-profits, education, advocacy organizations, etc.)?
4. What do you think would be the best structure for a COE (a single entity doing all this work, single entity with subcontractors, conglomeration of several smaller organizations, etc.)?
5. What other workforce challenges could a COE address?