

TO: Members of the House Judicial Committee

FROM: Sam Price, President/CEO, Ten16 Recovery Network  
Michigan Opioids Task Force, region 5 representative  
Chair, Substance Use Disorder Sub-Committee, The Provider Alliance (CMHA)

DATE: June 21, 2023

RE: HB-4690 Secular Recovery Bill

As a regional treatment provider for substance use disorders across mid-Michigan and the chair of the Chair, Substance Use Disorder Sub-Committee, The Provider Alliance (CMHA), we provide our support of HB-4690.

The proposed bill under consideration seeks to delineate treatment programs and mutual aid groups. Currently, there is a common misconception that participating in support groups such as 12-Step fellowships is tantamount to undergoing treatment. However, it is important to acknowledge that while these groups can serve as a valuable supplement to treatment, they operate autonomously. By establishing clear distinctions between treatment programs and mutual aid groups, this bill aims to promote greater understanding and more effective utilization of both resources.

This proposed legislation aims to provide individuals who are currently struggling with substance use disorders and are involved with the legal system with the option to select their preferred mutual aid program during their probation or parole period. While Alcoholics Anonymous and Narcotics Anonymous have demonstrated efficacy, they have a spiritual foundation that has been legally classified as "religious." This legislation seeks to address this concern by affording individuals the opportunity to choose a program that aligns with their personal beliefs and values.

Studies have shown that actively participating in a mutual aid group is the key to it having a sustaining impact and is more beneficial than simply attending. It is important to note that individuals who attend a group solely to comply with a court order may not be able to establish positive connections if the group's philosophy or practices do not align with their beliefs. Today, there are multiple recovery pathways available, and recognized groups are offering support systems through both local and virtual means. This legislation ensures that defendants have the opportunity to select the pathway that best suits their needs, which is crucial for sustaining their recovery journey.



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