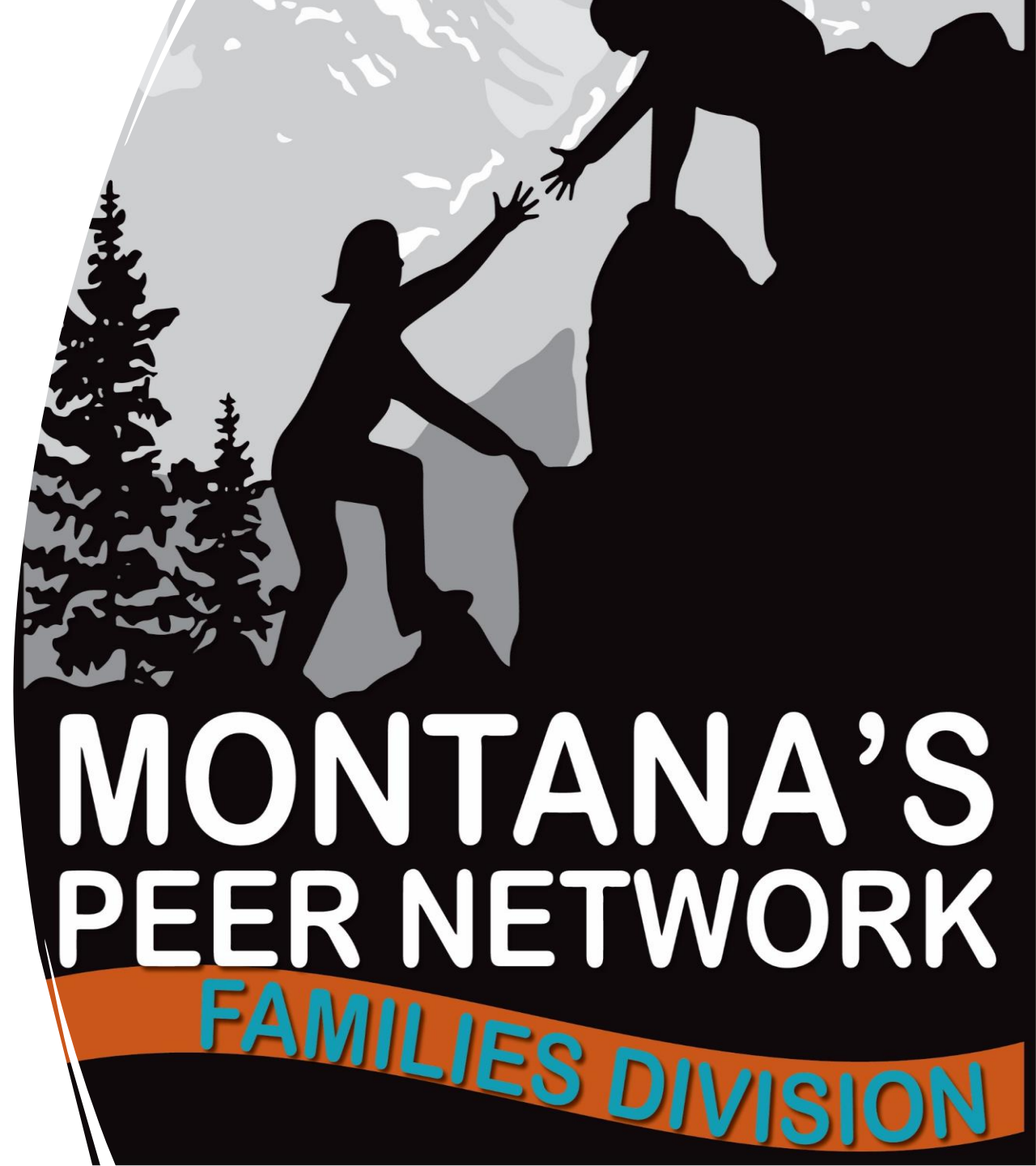


# Family Peer Support

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Presented by Beth Ayers



# Family Peer Support Defined

- A trained parent or caregiver with lived experience raising a child with a behavioral health challenge and/or special healthcare need who provides support to another parent or caregiver currently raising a child with similar healthcare needs.
- The Family Peer Supporter works directly with the parent or caregiver, **not the child**, providing emotional support, resources, and connection to community.

# SIMILARITIES and DIFFERENCES Among PEER SUPPORT MODELS in MT

	BEHAVIORAL HEALTH PEER SUPPORT	FAMILY PEER SUPPORT
Peer Support is Provided By	An individual over 18 who has lived experience and is in recovery from a behavioral health disorder (includes mental illness & SUD)	A parent/caregiver with lived experience raising a child under 21 with a behavioral health challenge and/or special healthcare need
Population Served	An individual over 18 with a behavioral health diagnosis (includes mental illness & SUD)	A parent/caregiver currently raising a child under 21 with a behavioral health challenge and/or special healthcare need
Who has the diagnosis?	The individual	The child
Who does the peer supporter work with?	The individual	The parent/caregiver
Montana State Certification	Yes, in 2017	Currently seeking through legislation
Medicaid Billable	Yes, in 2019	Currently seeking through legislation
Standardized Training Requirements	Yes, set by the Montana Department of Labor & Industry Board of Behavioral Health	No

# Importance of Lived Experience

- Makes Family Peer Support a unique service
- Someone who can relate to the often-overwhelming feelings of shame, blame, fear, and loss parents experience
- Means families don't have to walk the journey alone
- Saves families and child-serving systems time and money
- Gives parents and families hope

Taken from National Federation of Families' online article "Family Peer Support Success Stories"

<https://www.ffcmh.org/family-peer-support-stories>

# Types of Support Provided

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Active Listening



Building Connection  
Through a Shared  
Lived Experience



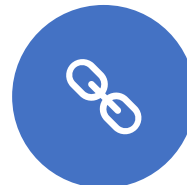
Offering Emotional  
Support



Advocating and  
Empowering



Helping with System  
Navigation

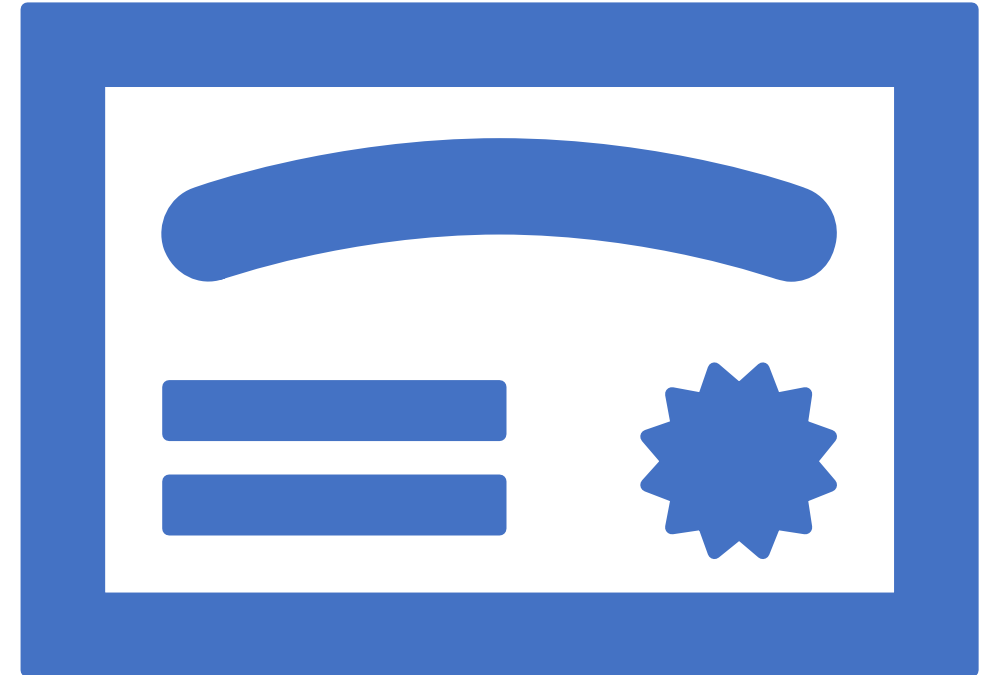


Connecting to  
Resources

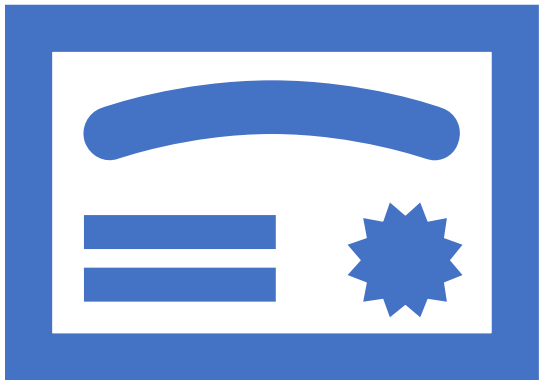
# History of Family Peer Support

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- National Certification was established in 2012- National Federation of Families (NFF)
- As of 2020, 28 states have certification
- Including Colorado, North Dakota, Idaho, Utah, Oregon, and Washington
- Montana is not one of the 28 states



# Importance of State Certification



- Supports Long-Term Health of the Program
- Increases Efficacy of the Service
- Assures Proper Trauma-Informed Training Standards are Met
- Defines Scope of Practice & Protects Workforce

“The family peer support workforce helps ensure that families can stay together while receiving the supports and services their children need and deserve or that they can receive appropriate services when that is not possible.”

-NFF “Family Peer Support Success Stories”

<https://www.ffcmh.org/family-peer-support-stories>

# Effects of Peer Support on Families

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Increases Family Engagement



Increases Caregiver Knowledge



Decreases Anxiety & Family Stress



Increases Family Empowerment



Increases Social Resources





# Value of Family Peer Support

## **The Family Receives:**

- connection
- emotional support
- community resources
- hope

## **The Child/Youth Receives:**

- uninterrupted care
- support in recovery
- healthier family relationships

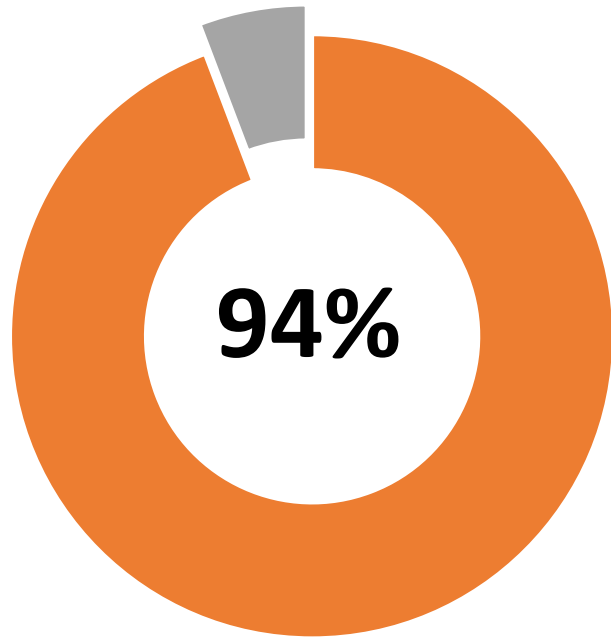
## **The Provider Receives:**

- engaged family
- lower costs
- more time
- better patient outcomes

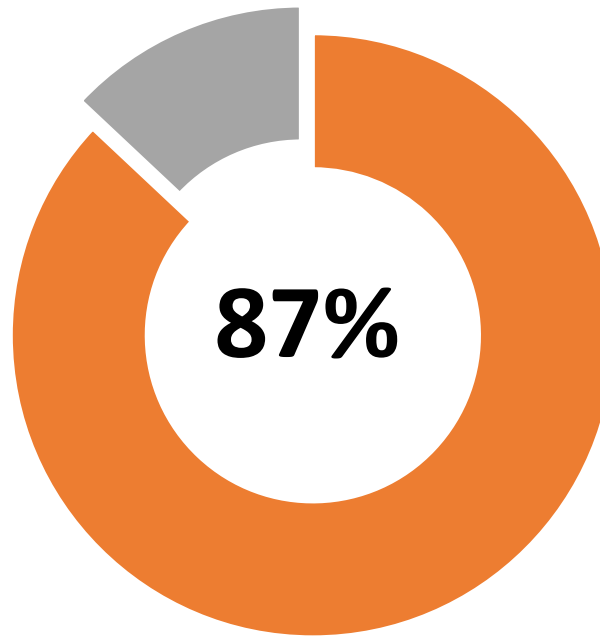
## **The System Receives:**

- lived experience
- growing workforce
- less use of acute care

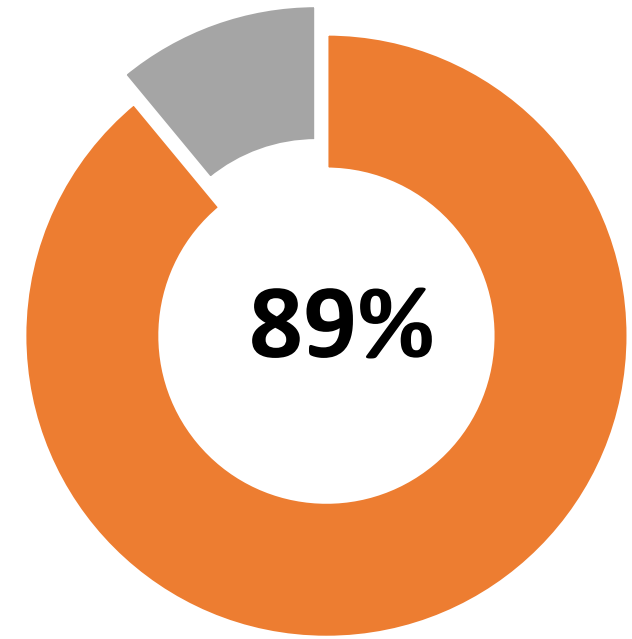
# FAMILY PEER SUPPORT SURVEY DATA\*



feel the quality of their family's life has **IMPROVED** since having access to a Family Peer Supporter



feel their child's care has **IMPROVED** since speaking to a Family Peer Supporter



feel **more comfortable & confident** managing their child's health challenges & care since speaking to a Family Peer Supporter

\*as of 11/27/23 with 131 families surveyed

# FPS Pilot Project

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**Survey Question-** *“If you didn’t have access to a Family Peer Supporter, who would you reach out to when you need support or have concerns?”*

- 129 Parent Interactions Surveyed over a 7 Month Period
- 2.5 FTE Family Peer Supporters
- 2 Sites- Helena & Billings
- Estimated 2074 Parent Interactions per Year
- Dollars Saved per Parent Interaction = \$132.60
- **Diversion Dollars Saved per Year = \$275,005.97**
- **Medicaid Dollars Saved per Year = \$244,755.31\***

**Every full-time Family Peer Supporter Saves Medicaid \$97,902.12 per Year**

\* Average of 89% of families supported have Medicaid for their child

# MT Family Peer Support Task Force

- Met for 1 year, twice a month
- Variety of Stakeholders
  - Family Members
  - DPHHS
  - Family-Run Organizations
  - Providers
- Developed Professional Standards
  - Scope of Practice
  - Code of Ethics
  - Core Competencies & Training Standards
  - Certification Requirements

# Next Steps

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1

Family Peer  
Support  
Certification

2

Bill in the 2025  
Legislative  
Session

3

Sponsor(s) to  
carry the bill

4

Funding for  
Family Peer  
Support