



Department of Human Services  
Addictions and Mental Health Division (AMH)

**Revised**

**DATE:** March 18, 2010  
**TO:** All AMH Staff  
**FROM:** Richard L. Harris  
Assistant Director  
**RE:** Consumer voice

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Over the past several months I have had the opportunity to meet with many people representing many mental health consumer groups. From these meetings it has become clear to me that there is a need for increased consumer voice within local and state government. Len and I recently met with the **Oregon Consumer Survivor Coalition (OCSC)** and together we have identified four ways by which consumer voice can be amplified:

1. Increased public education on addiction and mental health issues;
2. Increased training for those providing addiction and mental health treatment;
3. Continued and increased peer support services and;
4. Supporting and promoting an independent voice in the addictions and mental health consumer community.

My initial commitment to increase consumer voice and to support and promote peer delivered services will be for AMH to provide phone and video support to the upcoming strategic planning summit sponsored by OCSC. The summit will identify a clear pathway to establishing a formal mechanism to support consumer voice statewide. In addition Oregon's Olmstead Plan calls for increased consumer participation in all aspects of transition from residential facilities to independent living with people having a key to their own home with access to addiction and mental health services when needed. To further consumer voice and increase consumer visibility in the community, OCSC will reach out to the addictions community and attend and participate in the OHA/DHS statewide budget forums scheduled around the state later this spring.

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These are important first steps in creating a solid foundation to promote consumer voice and visibility within local communities and local and state government. I look forward to continuing dialogue with the OCSC and others to develop a highly visible and robust consumer voice as part of AMH and the developing OHA.

LR/mr