

Governor Kitzhaber Meets With Mental Health Consumer/Psychiatric Survivor Leaders About Healthcare Transformation. June 13, 2012

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OCSC Secretary Mark Fisher of Grants Pass, Oregon Governor John Kitzhaber, OCSC President Rebecca Eichhorn of Salem, and OCSC Board Member David Oaks of Eugene, pose for photo after

Oregon's Governor John Kitzhaber met face-to-face today in his office with a delegation representing the united state-wide voice of Oregonians diagnosed with psychiatric disorders, OCSC President, Rebecca Eichhorn, said, "We are concerned that as Oregon health care transformation moves forward that the valuable and unique role of peers, that is, those with lived experienced of a mental health diagnosis will be marginalized." Also attending the meeting were OCSC board members Mark Fisher and David Oaks, as well as Sean Kolmer, who is the Governor's Assistant Health Policy Advisor.

OCSC asked the Governor to support creating an Oregon Office of Mental Health Consumer/Survivor Activities, as promised in Oregon's Olmstead Plan, which contain

written steps for deinstitutionalization as required by the US Supreme Court. OCSC also asked that the Governor support mental health consumer/psychiatric survivor meaningful involvement in Oregon's health care transformation.

Said Mark Fisher, "We need to defend the unique and valuable role of Peer Support Specialist, Peer Services, and Peer-Run organizations. We ask you, Governor Kitzhaber, for your leadership in ensuring that peers are not marginalized but included as a vital part of the health care transformation."

David Oaks said, "In the past decade since your first terms as Governor, Oregon has become one of the few US States to zero-out resources for the state-wide voice of mental health consumers and psychiatric. For the past five years, OCSC has asked a question about that: Why zero?"

The OCSC delegation ended the meeting on a positive note, saying that the State of Oregon also now has the potential to lead nationally in a major paradigm change in mental health care. The delegation left the Governor a copy of the book *Anatomy of an Epidemic* by journalist Robert Whitaker, who has visited Oregon many times because of the possibility for major changes in the mental health system

here. Governor Kitzhaber expressed support for all the goals brought up during the meeting, and pledged to issue a public letter in the near future to that effect.