

HOUSE BILL NO. 621

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A BILL FOR AN ACT ENTITLED: "AN ACT ALLOWING A LOCAL FIRST RESPONDER ENTITY TO  
ESTABLISH A PEER SUPPORT PROGRAM; PROVIDING FOR MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS OF A LOCAL  
FIRST RESPONDER PEER SUPPORT PROGRAM; AND PROHIBITING A QUALIFIED PEER SUPPORTER  
FROM TESTIFYING ABOUT THE CONTENT OF A PEER SUPPORT SESSION."

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MONTANA:

**NEW SECTION. Section 1. Local first responder peer support programs.** (1) A police department,  
sheriff's office, fire department, or emergency medical service provider may establish a first responder peer  
support program that is in compliance with the provisions of this section.

(2) A local first responder peer support program must have a written policy that outlines, at a  
minimum:

(a) qualifications for a peer supporter, including certification and continuing education  
requirements;

(b) guidelines for what constitutes a peer support session from a conversation between peers;

(c) definitions for a group debrief and peer support team;

(d) the prohibition of recording in writing or by video or audio any peer support session;

(e) how peer supporters in the program shall comply with the Health Insurance Portability and  
Accountability Act of 1996, 42 U.S.C. 1320d, et seq.;

(f) the ability of an employee to use multiple peer supporters;

(g) the protection of an employee from being forced to use a peer supporter who holds supervisory  
authority over the employee;

(h) the prohibition of harassment or discrimination against an employee or volunteer who seeks  
services from the peer support program; and

- 1 (i) confidentiality protections of the peer support program, including the following exceptions:
- 2 (i) if the employee has committed or plans to commit a crime; ~~and~~
- 3 (ii) if the employee indicates the employee will cause harm to themselves or to others;
- 4 (III) IF THERE IS A REQUEST FROM AN APPROPRIATE LICENSING BOARD; AND
- 5 (IV) IF THE MANDATORY REPORTING REQUIREMENTS OF LICENSING BOARDS APPLY.
- 6 (3) A peer support session is confidential, and, EXCEPT AS PROVIDED IN SUBSECTION (2)(I), a qualified
- 7 peer supporter in a local first responder peer support program is prohibited from providing testimony about a
- 8 peer support session, including individual and group peer support sessions.

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10 NEW SECTION. Section 2. Codification instruction. [Section 1] is intended to be codified as an

11 integral part of Title 7, chapter 32, ~~part 24~~, and the provisions of Title 7, chapter 32, ~~part 24~~, apply to [section 1].

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