



For: Law, Justice, Health and Human Services committee meeting September 6, 2022

Good afternoon, Councilmembers,

I am writing today to provide testimony about [Proposed Motion 2022-0273](#): Creating a Behavioral Health Recovery Champion Award.

It is wonderful to hear about the creation of an annual King County Behavioral Health Recovery Champion Award. Acknowledging and honoring our behavioral health heroes and champions is so important and needed these days.

During the pandemic, amid scores of canceled in person events and conferences, King County Recovery Coalition decided to hold a **Gratitude for the Frontlines** campaign. It came to our attention that as many medical and fire/police frontline workers were being honored during COVID, behavioral health frontline workers were not always acknowledged. Gratitude for the Frontlines was a way we could shine a light and say thank you to our very own heroes. KCRC invited people all over King County to nominate behavioral health individuals and organizations who had made a difference in their lives, recovery, work, and/or a loved ones' life. We had a huge and engaged 2020/21 campaign reception: over 60 individuals and 17 organizations were nominated, by patients, clients, families, colleagues, and supervisors.

KCRC gathered items and created care packages for each nominee. We included thank you notes and certificates of appreciation and delivered them all over the County. We held Gratitude lunches at two organizations where several of their employees were nominated, Recovery Café and the Renton Evergreen Treatment Services location.

It was a beautiful project, start to finish, reading all the stories, getting to take in care packages and lunches, and holding a KCRC Presents webinar celebrating Gratitude for the Frontlines. We had a panel of nominees and their colleagues, who shared their experiences during the pandemic and why they work in behavioral health. Dow Constantine graciously recorded a thank you video which opened the program.

Each recipient shared how much this expression of gratitude and appreciation meant to them, how deeply touched they were to be recognized and honored. Today, a year and half later, the need for behavioral health services, overdose prevention, and integrated

care in our community has skyrocketed. There are so many angels among us doing this necessary, vital, and often very hard work, and are doing so in a behavioral health workforce crisis. Many have developed their own behavioral health condition such as anxiety, depression, burnout, Zoom fatigue and exhaustion.

Implementing an annual KC Behavioral Health Recovery Champion Award is a beautiful expression of this gratitude and appreciation for these heroes in our County. I believe strongly that this will have a very positive impact, will help morale and afford an opportunity to showcase the brilliant, committed, passionate people making a real difference, on a daily basis. It brings recovery into the conversation, helping to reduce stigma and spread awareness that recovery is possible, that with access to services within a person's window of willingness, we DO recover!

Thank you for your consideration and for your service.

In gratitude,

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Gratitude for the Frontlines landing page, including nominees and our nomination form
<https://kcrecovery.org/frontlines/>

KCRC Presents: Gratitude for the Frontlines webinar Including KC Executive's message of thanks and appreciation
<https://vimeo.com/553090817>

Recovery Café Gratitude Lunch
<https://vimeo.com/540361949>
ETS Renton Gratitude Lunch
<https://vimeo.com/528054649>