

# Leno's bill a shot in arm to key niche of health care

## Would certify peer support staff, shift service cost to feds

By MARK HEDIN

**A** MEASURE working its way through the Legislature promises to revolutionize behavioral health care services in California by professionalizing the growing client-driven workforce.

San Francisco state Sen. Mark Leno's Peer and Family Support Specialist Certification Program Act, introduced in February, cleared the Senate 40-0 in late May and is now in the Assembly, where it will be taken up by the Health Committee on July 14.

SB614 would set statewide standards for training, certification and regulation of peer support services, and require Medi-Cal to reimburse counties from half to

all of the costs of those services, according to Leno's office, which said it is amending the Assembly version of the bill "to reflect that much work has already been done here in California."

Peer support is the fastest-growing route to recovery in mental health and substance abuse services. S.F.'s Department of Behavioral Health Services employs several hundred peer specialists and wants to add more.

At least 6,000 people do peer support work in California, and training programs exist, for instance, at City College of San Francisco, which offers a 16-unit Community Mental Health Worker Certificate program, but "every county does it differently," Sally Zinman of the California Association of Mental Health Peer-Run Organizations told The Extra. "There's no standard curriculum."

However, more than 30 states and the Department of Veterans Affairs have established curricula and certification protocols for peer provider services, the text of SB614 notes.

The importance of peers in the recovery from addiction and mental illness is explained by Leno in a statement to The Extra:

"Peer providers utilize their lived experience to help others. So their support for people who have mental illness or substance abuse disorders is significant. Studies show that peer specialists help improve an individual's overall recovery and wellness, shorten hospital stays, alleviate depression and reach underserved populations. A statewide certification program will only enhance these services and improve the quality of care standards for Californians who live with mental illness."

"People know that it works," Zinman said. "It's happening and it's going to grow."

With the advent of the Affordable Care Act, there are about 12 million Californians newly enrolled in Medi-Cal. About a quarter of them may require mental health services, Leno's office estimates.

A February report by the California Mental Health Planning Council titled "Peer Certification: What Are We Waiting For?" dubbed peer specialists "the Sherpas of the mental health care world" and said Leno's legislation fills an urgent need because there are likely to be workforce

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# CENTRAL CITY

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SAN FRANCISCO

## TENDERLOIN



PHOTO: MARJORIE BEGGS

**Two weeks before the Tenderloin Museum opens, it's still shrouded in a plywood parade. The museum's contents weren't available at press time, but The Blackhawk surely has a spot. In a nod to enriching the knowledge of the neighborhood and to complement the museum's opening, The Extra features a jazz expert's appreciation of the club's legacy on Pages 4-6.**

# Our own museum

## Highlights from hood's rich past finally get venue

By MARJORIE BEGGS

**R**ANDY SHAW, Tenderloin Housing Clinic executive director, had a dream eight years ago: a museum to highlight the neighborhood's cool past, its jazz legends, LGBT pioneers, film exchanges, rock recording studios, waves of immigrants, tea dances and much more.

"We need to preserve our past. Our history is amazing," he mused in 2007 at a Tenderloin Futures Collaborative meeting where he introduced his idea to the community. "It'll be a place with photos, artifacts, maybe oral histories on tape."

The reaction was pleased nods tempered with the knowledge that change comes to the Tenderloin slowly.

Fast forward. The Tenderloin Museum opens July 16 on the ground floor of the landmark Cadillac Hotel, 398 Eddy St. Following an invitation-only ceremony, the public's invited at 2 p.m. to see how Shaw has brought his

brainchild to life, following the hood's history from 1906 to "almost the present," he says.

Exhibition centerpieces, he says, will include recordings of music performed at The Blackhawk Jazz Club, at Turk and Hyde, where Miles Davis, Billie Holiday, Charlie Parker, Dave Brubeck, Thelonious Monk and others played 14 years — 1949 to 1963. The club gave these musical giants endless creative opportunities and hugely affected the global perception of jazz.

A historic pinball machine has pride of place, and recordings done at Wally Heider Studios on Hyde Street in the 1970s feature the Grateful Dead, Santana and Crosby, Stills, Nash & Young.

"We'll also have a big retail presence with Tenderloin-branded items for sale," Shaw says, "T-shirts, posters and more, all done in a distinctive design."

As a nice fit with the Tenderloin's past, the museum will be both a daytime gallery and a destination for evening events. The first, 7 p.m. opening day, celebrates the legacy of transgender activism in the 'Loin with video clips and sound from "Screaming Queens," the 2005 documentary about transgender women and drag queens who fought police harassment at Compton's Cafeteria at Turk and Taylor in 1966, called "ground zero for drugs and violence" by the Tenderloin police just two years ago.

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