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May 19, 2017

Dear Chair Monnes Anderson, Vice-Chair Krus, and ranking members Knopp, Beyer Hayward,

As the Oregon Legislature and Senate Committee on Health Care meets to consider amendment HB2303-A3, I urge you to imagine the impact on private practice counselors, coaches, hypnotherapists, clergy, and the Oregon citizens who regularly seek complimentary and alternative health care.

The Oregon Board of Licensed Counselors and Therapists rejected this idea in their February 7, 2014 Board meeting stating, "Statutory changes should be a last resort. Legislative process is time consuming, expensive, and it is preferable to have a policy that we automatically send unlicensed practice cases to OPBE and DOJ." In the same meeting, there was discussion of how removing the education exemption would harm therapists. Making this change will put thousands of complimentary and alternative health care practitioners out of work. The Board ultimately advised not to legislate and referred back to their role of consumer protection.

As we discuss the role of protecting our citizens in today's society, there is always the balancing element of freedom. As humans, we want security, consistency and control over our environment. However without personal freedom, choice and variation, we cannot thrive. Thriving is what complimentary and alternative health care providers specialize in. Most of us became the practitioners we are because we were once helped by the same practice or modality we now specialize in, and for some, it was a life saving opportunity. **In our society as a whole, we cannot afford to lose this freedom of choice.**

If we are considering HB2303-A3 in the interest of safety, we should be expending our energies elsewhere. My car recently stopped moving suddenly on Hwy 99E in Portland, because the mechanic I paid \$1200 to fix it didn't know what he was doing. I did not cause a six-car pileup, thanks to the smart driver behind me, and my hazard lights. How often do we experience a single customer complaint of a complimentary or alternative health care practitioner being this dangerous? Yet, auto mechanics in the state of Oregon have no credentialing requirements. When I took my car to a new mechanic, I was armed with more questions and took the appropriate time that one should while discussing the safety of what basically amounts to a 2,00 pound killing machine moving at high speeds. Let's not discount our citizens' ability to decide what's right for them on their own.



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According to the National Center for Complementary and Integrative Health, the majority of people who seek complimentary and alternative health care are women, and those with higher levels of education and income. They do their research, and they ask questions. They use complimentary or alternative health care for a variety of reasons, one of which is increased availability. Often these modalities are easier to understand, safer, and less expensive than conventional medications or treatments. Some patients have developed mistrust or frustration with our clinical health care system and understand that many factors contribute to healing, and that complimentary health care is more holistic in nature. Regulating and legislating will change all of that.

According to the US National Library of Medicine National Institutes of Health's 2007 report on Current Issues Regarding Complementary and Alternative Medicine in the United States, 50% of adults seeking complimentary and alternative health care were Native American or Alaska Natives. I am a First Nations member of the Coquille Indian Tribe. (Our homelands are on and around the southern Oregon coastal area.) I sit on my Tribe's Health Advisory Board and I am a member of the Board of Directors that oversees our self-funded insurance company, Nasomah. I know first hand that when discussing regulation of an alternative or complementary treatment modality that may include religious or spiritual components such as guided imagery, meditation, dance, or any other method that's closer to a traditional healing practice than western clinical medicine, it's imperative that we take the necessary time to consider our impact. There are reasons that some of these religious and spiritual practices are protected under the American Indian Religious Freedom Act. Stepping into the role of legislating these practices may be a lot more complicated than the State of Oregon anticipates, and is definitely more than our citizens want.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Shuenhalni, (be careful-be safe)

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'J. Andrews', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Jen Procter Andrews