



TO: House Health Care Committee

FROM: Mark Retzlaff, Government Relations Chair
AMTA Oregon

DATE: March 1, 2021

RE: Support for HB 2517

The American Massage Therapy Association Oregon is pleased to have been included in a multi-year effort to improve Oregon's utilization management review process. We want to be clear that this legislation does NOT change what health insurance plans are required to cover or what services are authorized. It merely requires that which is covered and has received prior authorization be available for a period of time. The insurer has chosen a plan with specific benefits which they have paid for – they should not have to jump through additional hoops and use time and resources to receive care.

The American Massage Therapy Association (AMTA) is the largest non-profit professional association serving massage therapists, massage students and massage schools. The AMTA Oregon (AMTA-OR) chapter currently includes approximately 2,000 members throughout Oregon. These licensed massage therapists' health care services are often included in insurance plans. We are not asking that all or more plans include massage. We are not asking that more massage sessions receive prior authorization. We are simply asking that those who have chosen and paid for insurance policies that include coverage actually have fair access to it.

Utilization management practices, such as prior authorization, are designed to contain costs and ensure quality of care. However, they also lead to paperwork, administrative oversight, and repetition that often leads to insureds giving up efforts to receive care to which they are entitled. HB 2517 assists both insurers and care providers by streamlining the process which results in more expedient care to patients. As example, if a patient has received prior authorization for a series of therapeutic massage session after a surgery, and those session are spread over 3 months, the patient and the massage therapist should not be required to go through additional approval for each session. HB 2517 improves the system making such redundancy and confusion less likely to occur.

We urge your support and offer our assistance as needed.