

Submitter: Melanie Eaton

On Behalf Of: Sustainable and accessible mental health care

Committee: House Committee On Behavioral Health and Health Care

Measure: HB2455

I support this bill!

I am a Licensed Clinical Social Worker in private practice, serving the community across the state of Oregon. I have been a Social Worker in Oregon for 16 years. Like many of my colleagues have expressed, I also believe it is unreasonable to expose providers to audits by insurers or CCO's when we are not given the standards by which he will be judged. We are being asked to risk our livelihoods to provide much needed mental health care to our community under the threat that we could be demanded to pay back thousands of dollars for things such as clerical errors or other errors without having informed the documentation standards in the first place. Insurers vary in their documentation standards that are not made known to the provider and to which we are held liable for recoupment. This leads many providers to cease their relationships with insurers and move to private pay only. This further limits our already very limited resource of available mental health clinicians in the State of Oregon.

HB 2455 will require each insurer or CCO to provide clear directions to each mental health provider submitting mental health claims, defining exactly what must be included in their documentation to avoid recoupment. This will reduce the overall number of recoupments in audits. This will also encourage more providers to work with insurance companies and expand the network of providers available to our Oregon residents who need to use their insurance coverage to access mental health care.

HB2455 provides additional protections and transparencies to the audit process that are in the spirit of insuring good clinical care to our Oregon residents. We need to move in this direction and away from protecting the assets of insurers and creating incentives for them to seek greater profits at the cost of clients of care and their clinicians.