

2/10/2025

Honorable Representative Rob Nosse
Chair, House Committee on Behavioral Health and Health Care
900 Court Street NE, Room 453
Salem, OR 97301

Dear Representative Nosse,

On behalf of The Estuary Center, I support and urge you to support HB 2023, which proposes to establish health insurance coverage for applied behavior analysis (ABA) therapy for individuals with intellectual and developmental disability diagnoses, ensuring parity with coverage for autism spectrum disorder diagnoses. This legislation is crucial for expanding access to essential ABA services for a broader population in need.

At the Estuary Center, we serve clients primarily with autism. However, we also have clients with other diagnoses such as Down Syndrome, Fragile X syndrome, and ADHD. We are small, a small yet mighty non-profit organization that aims to serve the most impacted individuals, those that most other companies reject, and provide them an opportunity to access their community via social skills, job skills, and self-help skills.

As the Clinical Director of the Estuary Center, I oversee services for 11 individuals currently, with 16 direct care staff and 2 BCBA's. We provide services in the Garden Home Recreation Center in Portland Oregon.

We support HB 2023 because everyone deserves options. Our non-profit is founded on this principle. ABA therapy has overcome many barriers, and the ABA therapy we provide is full of reinforcement, choice, support, kindness, and compassion. All of our students flourish, and you can catch us at Starbucks every Friday. By supporting HB 2023, you are supporting one of our students: A young man we serve was diagnosed with Down Syndrome at birth, but did not receive an autism diagnosis until age 10. This prevented him from accessing many services through insurance during this time. Since receiving his diagnosis and joining our center, he has begun to access social interactions with peers, order drinks at Starbucks and Dairy Queen, and use coping strategies to deal with the challenges of becoming a teenager.

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HB 2023 is a necessary step toward equitable access to evidence-based therapies for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. We respectfully urge the committee to vote in favor of HB 2023.

Thank you for your time and service to the state of Oregon. And I always look forward to your Monday newsletter, thank you for taking the time to update your constituents.

Sincerely,

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