

Submitter: Colin Wolf
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Senate Committee On Health Care
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB61

SB61 has the potential to be landmark legislation that expands access to services for Medicaid community members, in an era of overwhelming need. I have been a licensed mental health provider in Portland for a decade. I served Medicaid clients through FamilyCare from 2015 until it closed. In the last five years, I have heard literal nightmare stories from other providers about the emotional and logistical stress of being audited and the devastation of having thousands of dollars clawed back for unintentional mistakes, from basic clerical errors to failing to meet subjective and sometimes arbitrary documentation standards for proving medical necessity. Those nightmare stories have prevented me from stepping back into Medicaid funded services. I would be honored to provide culturally sensitive services to some of the most marginalized and vulnerable members of our community, and I would eagerly do that if this legislation becomes law, dramatically transforming the practices used for compliance from draconian and overly punitive, to fair and balanced. We need to shift the focus to finding actual fraud instead and building a sustainable network of providers who show up for this challenging and rewarding work.