

Hello and thank you for hearing this bill. I am a constituent writing as a behavioral health therapist who works with clients with Medicaid. I am writing in support of this bill which would reduce the amount of money that could be clawed back from clinicians. This is necessary because: Oregon has a shortage of healthcare providers and is one of the worst states nationally for mental health, audit practices are unfair and confusing, and Oregon's most vulnerable citizens deserve care from providers who aren't terrified about losing their livelihood.

One of the greatest stressors, if not the biggest terror, of being a provider who bills Medicaid is worry over having huge amounts of your income taken back due to simple errors in billing. Medicaid rules use esoteric language and a provider can be audited on regional, state, and federal levels. While each level tries to follow similar guidelines, interpretation can vary, thus putting providers in an impossible situation trying to understand how to bill. It is like playing a game written in another language, with three sets of rules that change frequently, and if you lose, you lose thousands of dollars that none of us have.

Most providers who bill Medicaid do so out of personal and professional ethics around working with underserved populations going through extreme hardship. Medicaid literally saves lives and we value our time working with our clients on Medicaid. It is an absolute atrocity, therefore, to be doing stressful work supporting clients going through serious hardship, and to have massive amounts of money clawed back in unjust ways. Currently, OHA is allowed to perform a chart audit, find an error, and extrapolate to the entire set included in the audit. This means, I could have money taken back from sessions that were billed *correctly* if OHA extrapolates from a claim with an error.

I lose sleep, health, and it affects my quality of living to worry about losing so much income in such an unpredictable way. I know of other clinicians who have become suicidal as a result of these unfair audits. I remain anonymous to remain more protected, but please know that these concerns are shared by 100% of my colleagues who bill Medicaid and we greatly appreciate your time, consideration, and most of all, passing these protections for clinicians doing this work.