



February 26, 2025

To: Chair Nosse, and Members of the House Committee on Behavioral Health and Health Care

Thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony regarding House Bill 3229, sponsored by Representative Nancy Nathanson.

This submission is on behalf of the members of the Oregon Behavioral Health Independent Providers Association (OBHIPA). Currently, OBHIPA includes four agencies that provide substance use treatment, mental health interventions, family preservation services, housing, medical, psychiatry, dental care, and more. OBHIPA represents Vally Mental Health, Options Counseling and Family Services, Bridgeway Community Health, and Catholic Community Services; combined we served thousands of clients in 2024, offering critical supports to many Oregonians with acute physical and mental health needs.

HB 3229 makes changes to the Oregon Health Plan (OHP) enrollment process, which will have a positive impact on access to behavioral health care for Oregonians who are OHP members. The current system for enrolling providers in the Oregon Health Plan has resulted in significant delays. OBHIPA agencies are eager to recruit and retain qualified providers. However, due to the backlog in the Oregon Health Authority (OHA) enrollment process, it is common for months to pass before our direct service team, including case managers, clinicians, and psychiatry staff are reimbursed for services provided.

For example, a therapist was hired in January of 2024. To ensure access to mental health services, the hiring agency provided initial training and within a month of hire, the therapist was assigned a full caseload. Unfortunately, the enrollment process for OHP was not completed until late June. This resulted in six months of services to clients that were not reimbursed. At an average of twenty hours of therapy provided each week, 400 hours of clinical services were provided. With a \$150 reimbursement rate for therapeutic billing codes, the agency was unable to receive over \$60,000 for these sessions. During the same period, the agency provided wages and benefits to the therapist valued at over \$50,000.

House Bill 3229 supports OBHIPA and other agencies through the following:

- Expedited processes for enrolling providers;
- Separate processes
  - Initial applications;
  - Changes in contact information or employment;
  - Credentialing changes, including updates to a provider's licensure or certification.
- Additional funding for OHA to reduce processing delays.

HB 3229 also mandates that Coordinated Care Organizations (CCOs) retroactively reimburse providers from the date a complete application is submitted to OHA. This is vital for the financial stability of provider agencies and helps expand mental health care access for Oregonians.

Thank you for joining us in our efforts to serve Oregonians.

Camille Soleil, Valley Mental Health, Board Chair  
Tim Murphy, Bridgeway Community Health, Vice Chair  
Josh Graves, Catholic Community Services, Treasurer  
Kelli McKnight, Options Counseling and Family Services, Secretary