



Removing Barriers to Care: Streamlining Credentialing & Empaneling for Providers

Written Testimony supporting House Bill 3229

The Challenge

Oregon has invested significantly in behavioral health funding treatment programs, mobile crisis response, harm reduction strategies, stabilization centers, and workforce expansion. These are critical steps toward improving access to care. However, bureaucratic delays in credentialing and empaneling keep qualified providers from providing services, leaving people in need waiting far too long.

The Oregon Health Authority (OHA) takes an average of 57 days to process credentialing applications, with a backlog of 4,500 applications. These delays are caused by:

- A high volume of applications, including updates for existing providers.
- Staffing shortages lead to slower processing times.
- Administrative errors that result in avoidable rejections and resubmissions.

Even after providers are credentialed, they face additional delays in empaneling with Coordinated Care Organizations (CCOs), meaning they cannot immediately begin providing services or receiving reimbursement. We have dedicated professionals ready to serve communities in need of care - our system should help, not hinder that connection.

The Solution: HB 3229

HB 3229 is designed to streamline these processes, eliminate unnecessary delays, and ensure providers can start working as soon as possible. By addressing these barriers, we can ensure that Oregon's investment in behavioral health translates into real, timely services for those needing them.

Key Provisions of HB 3229:

1. **Ensure Fair and Timely Reimbursement:** CCOs must recognize the date a completed DMAP application is submitted as the official start date for reimbursement eligibility, preventing financial gaps caused by administrative delays.
2. **Improve Processing Efficiency:** OHA must create separate processing tracks for different types of applications (e.g., new providers vs. simple administrative updates) to prevent unnecessary slowdowns.
3. **Reduce Credentialing Backlogs:** Allocates funding for temporary staff at OHA to clear the backlog and ensure applications are processed within 14 days.
4. **Enhance Communication:** If an application is approved in error, OHA must notify both the provider and their employer to prevent unnecessary delays in service start dates.
5. **Speed Up Empaneling:** Requires CCOs to review and act on completed empaneling applications within 30 days.



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6. **Modernize the Enrollment System:** Directs OHA to study and develop an automated online tool to simplify provider enrollment and updates, improving efficiency and reducing human error.

Why This Matters

Oregon has firmly committed to strengthening behavioral health services, but without efficient credentialing and empaneling processes, those investments won't reach the people who need them most.

By passing HB 3229, we can **remove unnecessary roadblocks, support our workforce, and ensure that individuals in need receive timely, quality care.** This simple, practical fix will have a profound impact - helping providers provide care faster and making behavioral health services more accessible for all Oregonians.

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