

March 9, 2025

Dear Chairman Nosse and Members of the House Committee on Behavioral Health and Health Care:

My name is Janiece Anjali. I am a Licensed Professional Counselor (LPC) practicing in Ashland, Oregon. I have had a private practice for six years. I am writing to express my strong support for HB2029.

I spend many hours a week carefully documenting my client sessions, submitting claims, and managing my business to support myself and family, pay my taxes, and meet the ever increasing costs of maintaining a business and professional licensure in my field. The care I take in all of this is part of my code of ethics as a member of the counseling profession and a good citizen.

In my experience of dealing with insurance companies, I have learned that most do not take the same care. Most don't seem to have an ethical code guiding their treatment of the providers they are supposed to be partnering with to provide care for Oregonians. This is why we need robust legislation. There is plenty of legislation to protect consumers from errant healthcare providers. HB2029 is a vital start to protect providers and, by extension, consumers, from harm by insurance companies or payors.

During preparation for and in sessions, I focus on the needs of my clients, but when I do paperwork or have to spend hours on the phone trying to get answers from payors, I am acutely aware that venture capital, corporate, and others are constantly trying to find ways to profit from my time, energy, and hard work, and, from that of my dedicated colleagues across the state. I have never been audited, but the concern and corresponding stress about how time-consuming and costly that I could be if I ever am, is part of my daily practice.

Passing and implementing HB2029 would address one of the many payor practices that make providing mental health care draining and disheartening. I have never been as drained or dispirited by any case as I have been by a variety of payor behaviors. Thank you for understanding and appreciating the need to protect behavioral health providers' time, energy, and resources for Oregonians in need. HB2029 would help make sure our energy is not wasted on anxiety about or attempting to deal with destructive payor practices without any protection or help from our state government.

At best, audits on claims that have already been accepted by a payor and paid is a shoddy and substandard way for payors to operate. At worst, such audits abuse providers and, ultimately, limit access to care for the people of Oregon, especially for those who or whose employers can only access or are sold plans by the worst offenders. Thank you for supporting HB2029 to facilitate, not just the survival, but the health and stability of client-centered and independent behavioral health care providers in Oregon.

Sincerely,
Janiece Anjali