

Submitter: Brandon Huffman

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Behavioral Health and Health Care

Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB2029

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

My name is Brandon Huffman and I am a Mental Health Therapist (Professional Counselor Associate), in the Eugene/Springfield area of Oregon and have been practicing for 3 years.

I am writing this letter in support of HB2029. Insurance audits are unclear, unfair, and structured to protect and benefit the insurance companies bottom line as opposed to the patients we serve. As a therapist in private practice seeing severely traumatized patients, I myself worry everyday whether an audit will occur that will bankrupt my private practice. An audit is not a straightforward and fair process. According to ongoing audit practices observed from the CCO's, clawbacks are occurring for unnecessary reasons which were never specified, spoken of, or written as requirements for therapists to review and/or follow. The guidance is purposefully ambiguous and muddy. Therapists have many requirements to abide by with time constraints such as how soon to write a note after sessions, when to mandatorily report an incident, how soon to bill before we can no longer bill, so surely an insurance company should be held to the same standards of reasonable time. If an insurance company cannot regularly audit within a reasonable timeframe which this bill annotates, then a therapist should not be held liable for an insurance companies lack of due diligence and follow through. Do to the nature of insurance in the state of Oregon, many of us therapists hesitate to take insurance due to their unfair practices. Ideally, I would rather have a majority of private paying clients, than a majority schedule of insurance clients. Unfortunately, accepting insurance has to be limited in order to protect the sustainability of my business and career. This in turn reduces access to care as I am certain I am not the only therapist who has to manage their own risk analysis with accepting insurance. CCO's currently make accepting insurance just as risky as gambling at a casino. But what the CCO's and casinos have in common is that the house always wins.

Thank you for supporting this bill.

Sincerely,

Brandon Huffman
Rise Above Counseling, LLC