

Submitter: Sarah Robbins

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Behavioral Health and Health Care

Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB2029

Members of the House Committee on Behavioral Health and Health Care,

My name is Sarah Frances Robbins, and I am here today to testify in strong support of House Bill 2029. As a behavioral health provider, patient advocate, and mental health practice owner, I have witnessed firsthand the critical need for reforming the audit processes that insurers, the Oregon Health Authority (OHA), and Coordinated Care Organizations (CCOs) use to review claims from behavioral health providers.

Oregon faces a behavioral health crisis, with many individuals struggling to access timely and effective care. Providers work tirelessly to meet the needs of patients, yet they are often burdened by opaque and overly punitive audit procedures. These audits, while necessary to ensure accountability, can sometimes result in unjust financial recoupments, discourage providers from serving Medicaid patients, and create unnecessary administrative barriers to care.

HB 2029 establishes fair and transparent guidelines for how insurers and CCOs conduct audits of behavioral health providers. It ensures that:

- 1) Providers receive clear, written documentation of audit requirements in plain language,
- 2) Recoupments cannot be demanded due to minor clerical errors,
- 3) Audit timeframes are reasonable and do not reach back excessively,
- 4) Auditors are qualified behavioral health professionals,
- 5) Audit processes are not structured to create financial incentives for auditors to recoup funds unfairly.

Currently, providers must navigate ever-changing audit criteria with little guidance, leading to unwarranted recoupments that threaten the financial stability of behavioral health clinics and independent practitioners. This instability disproportionately impacts providers serving low-income and historically marginalized communities, exacerbating inequities in care. HB 2029 offers essential protections that will allow behavioral health professionals to focus on their primary mission—helping patients heal.

When providers face financial hardship due to unpredictable and unfair audit practices, the real impact is felt by the patients they serve. Patients experience increased wait times, reduced access to specialized care, and, in some cases, the complete loss of a trusted provider. HB 2029 promotes stability in the behavioral

health workforce, ensuring that Oregonians continue to receive the mental health and substance use disorder treatment they need.

HB 2029 is a common-sense measure that brings fairness, clarity, and transparency to the auditing process. By supporting this bill, we can reduce administrative burdens, protect providers from undue financial harm, and ultimately improve access to behavioral health care for all Oregonians.

I respectfully urge the committee to pass HB 2029 and support Oregon's behavioral health workforce and the patients they serve. Thank you for your time and consideration. I am happy to answer any questions you may have.