

Dear Chair Nosse and Members of the House Behavioral Health and Health Care Committee,

My name is Elisabeth Herrera, LPC, NCC, and I am the President of the Coalition of Oregon Professional Associations for Counseling and Therapy (COPACT), an organization that works on behalf of all licensed professional counselors, licensed marriage and family therapists, registered associates, and students in counseling and marriage and family therapy programs. We are a partner of the Oregon Counseling Association (ORCA), and our mission is to advance access to quality mental health care for all Oregonians.

HB 2029 addresses several key concerns that have long impacted mental health providers and other healthcare professionals. First, it mandates clear guidelines from insurers, ensuring that providers receive detailed explanations about claim requirements. This is critical, as inconsistent and vague expectations can lead to unnecessary denials and financial strain on providers. Furthermore, the bill requires insurers to give at least 30 days' advance notice before any changes to claim requirements take effect. This allows providers adequate time to adjust their practices and ensure compliance. Another significant provision of HB 2029 is the requirement that insurers respond to any documents submitted by providers within 30 days allowing for a more timely process.

Additionally, the bill ensures that providers are not unfairly penalized for minor clerical errors. The ability to correct such mistakes within a 30-day window prevents unnecessary financial penalties and allows for administrative errors to be addressed in good faith. Similarly, if a provider is required to repay funds, HB 2029 ensures that they are offered a reasonable repayment plan of up to three years. This provision helps providers stay financially stable while fulfilling their obligations. Lastly, HB 2029 protects providers from being subjected to multiple overlapping audits, by limiting insurers to conducting only one audit at a time for the same provider.

In summary, HB 2029 is a crucial step in fostering a fair and efficient audit process that allows healthcare providers to focus on their primary mission—serving the mental health needs of Oregonians. I urge the committee to pass HB 2029 to support providers and protect access to quality mental health care in Oregon.

Sincerely,

Elisabeth Herrera, LPC, NCC

President, Coalition of Oregon Professional Associations for Counseling and Therapy (COPACT)