

Submitter: Sasha Strong  
On Behalf Of:  
Committee: House Committee On Behavioral Health and Health Care  
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB2029

Dear Chair Nosse and Members of the Committee,

I am a Licensed Professional Counselor practicing in Portland, and a member of the Oregon Counseling Association. I am writing in support of HB 2029 because health insurance audits and clawbacks place significant burden on behavioral health providers, which creates downstream negative effects on Oregonians who need behavioral health care. Current Oregon law allows insurers too much leeway and significantly disadvantages solo behavioral health providers and small practices. HB 2029 makes sensible reforms to the law that will support behavioral health providers who want to take insurance and increase access to behavioral health care for all Oregonians. Please vote to move HB 2029 forward.

Although I have never personally experienced an audit, I have known some professionals who have, and I can attest that many mental health professionals in our community are averse to working with insurance because of their fears of audits and clawbacks. Moreover, many mental health providers experience anxiety due to arbitrary requirements for clinical documentation, which often have little connection to the effective provision of care, and seem more oriented to satisfying the bureaucratic caprices of insurance companies.

It is clear there is a mental health crisis in Oregon, and as such is it important to enhance access to care for Oregonians. As part of that, it is important not to let third party payers use punitive or arbitrary approaches to insurance audits. This bill could go a long way in enhancing health providers' trust, reducing paperwork burdens, reducing anxiety, and opening up access to care for Oregonians. Please support HB 2029.

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