

Submitter: Donnella Wood, MA, LPC

On Behalf Of: Committee: House Committee On Behavioral Health and Health Care Measure: HB2455

Chair Nosse and Members of the House Committee of Behavioral Health and Health Care:

I am a Licensed Professional Counselor in private practice. I have been helping clients at my office in Portland and online throughout the state since 2016. I am writing to ask you to pass HB 2455.

Reimbursement rates for mental care providers are already unacceptably low for most insurance panels. Unfair or unjust audit processes make mental health providers less willing to be paneled with insurance companies and put practitioners that are contracted with them at risk of unfair treatment in an audit process.

Oregon needs more mental health providers to be available to provide care, not less. HB 2455 will make the audit process more transparent, just, and rare which will encourage providers to stay on insurance panels and to remain in practice to provide care to our most vulnerable citizens.

It is difficult to avoid audits because even though documentation requirements vary with each carrier, insurers and CCOs are not required to provide written directions to providers to clearly explain how to successfully document services in order to pass audits. HB 2455 will require each insurer or CCO to provide clear directions to each mental health provider submitting mental health claims, defining exactly what must be included in their documentation to avoid recoupment. This will reduce the overall number of recoupments in audits. For these and other reasons too lengthy to go into, please pass HB 2455. Accessing mental health services must be easier in Oregon, and this bill can help.

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