

**REVENUE: No revenue impact**

**FISCAL: Minimal fiscal impact, no statement issued**

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**Action:** Do Pass With Amendments to the A-Engrossed Measure and Be Printed B-Engrossed

**Vote:** 3 - 0 - 2

**Yeas:** Kruse, Morrisette, Monnes Anderson

**Nays:** 0

**Exc.:** Bates, Morse

**Prepared By:** Robert Shook, Administrator

**Meeting Dates:** 5/7, 5/19, 5/21

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**WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:** Requires health benefit plans to include coverage for licensed professional counselors and licensed family therapists acting within their scope of practice. Prohibits the practice of “professional counseling” or “marriage and family therapy” and the use of those terms by unlicensed individuals. Exempts certified alcohol and drug counselors who are practicing within their scope of practice. Revises statutory definitions; requires training in the diagnosis of mental disorders for licensing by the Oregon Board of Licensed Professional Counselors and Therapists as a professional counselor or marriage and family therapist. Clarifies health maintenance organizations contracting issues.

**ISSUES DISCUSSED:**

- Access to mental health services in rural areas
- Licensing standards
- Issues of consumer protection
- Consumer protection

**EFFECT OF COMMITTEE AMENDMENT:** Clarifies the ability of health maintenance organizations to limit the receipt of covered services performed by professional counselors and marriage/family therapists, and delineates substantive plan benefit and reimbursement differentials applied to contracting and non-contracting providers.

**BACKGROUND:** The Oregon Board of Licensed Professional Counselors and Therapists was created to assist the public by setting education, experience and examination standards for licensed professional counselors and licensed marriage and family therapists, and investigating complaints against licensees and unlicensed counselors and therapists claiming to be licensed. Proponents assert that House Bill 2506 B provides consumer protection by:

- Distinguishing licensed mental health providers from unlicensed providers;
- Preventing unlicensed counselors and therapists from using misleading language;
- Requiring that unlicensed counselors and therapists disclose their status; and
- Providing for penalties for failure to comply.

Additionally, proponents state that House Bill 2506 B improves access to treatment and increases consumer choice by:

- Recognizing all licensed mental health providers as clinical mental health providers; and
- Making all licensed mental health providers eligible for reimbursement under insurance plans.