



HB 2503: Lactation Support Providers

Lactation professionals provide critical services to new mothers and their infants. Breastfeeding has direct health benefits for newborns, including lowering the risk of asthma, childhood leukemia, type 2 diabetes and other illnesses.

Although the Affordable Care Act included directives to increase access to breastfeeding support services by requiring insurance billing for these services, some barriers to increased access and affordability still exist.

Some breastfeeding support services are billed and reimbursed, but in other instances, billing is not possible due to insurer requirements and other obstacles. One challenge is that Oregon lacks a state licensure program for lactation professionals, which prevents the lactation professionals in our state from billing insurance companies for their services. This, in turn, raises the cost of these services for new mothers.

HB 2503 was drafted to solve this problem. The bill creates a state licensure program for Certified Lactation Consultants and Lactation Educators. But the bill does even more than that. Not only will the bill enable these professionals to bill insurance companies for their service; it will also ensure that the professionals are trained and competent, ultimately increasing access to **quality** lactation support services for new mothers.

KEY POINTS

This bill will lower the cost of lactation support services by allowing lactation professionals to bill insurers for their services. The Health Licensing Office will issue lactation consultant and lactation educator licenses to qualified lactation consultants who have been certified through the International Board of Lactation Consultant Examiners and to qualified lactation educators who have completed a breastfeeding education course recognized by the Lactation Education Accreditation and Approval Review Committee. The licensing will enable these lactation professionals to bill the insurance companies and to lower the cost of lactation support for new mothers.

The bill also will improve the quality of lactation support services by requiring licensed lactation service providers to complete continuing education courses. These courses, providing training in cultural competency and trauma-informed care, will ensure excellent care for new mothers and their infants.

Thank you, Mr. Chair, for hearing this bill.