

Dear Members of the Oregon House Committee on Behavioral Health,

My name is Kirsten Meneghello, JD, PCC, and I am respectfully writing to ask you to amend HB 2493 to remove references to “life coaches” as a category of “alternative therapy practitioners” regulated under the bill.

I have been a professional coach for eleven years and have been a member of the International Coaching Federation (“ICF”) since 2010. I serve on the Board of Directors for the ICF Oregon State Chapter, which is a nonprofit association for professional coaches in the State of Oregon. I own Illumination Coaching LLC and am employed full-time as an external Executive and Leadership coach for corporate clients, mostly with 1,000 or more employees.

ICF Oregon's position on this bill is:

- Coaches have been included as “alternative therapy practitioners” incorrectly. Coaching is not, nor claims to be, a form of therapy. Coaching is partnering with clients in a thought-provoking and creative process that inspires them to maximize their personal and professional potential. Coaching focuses on visioning, success, the present and moving toward the future. Contrast that with therapy, which emphasizes psychopathology, emotions, and the past to understand the present, and it works more with developing skills for managing emotions or past issues than does coaching. Knowing when to refer a client to other professionals is an important part of any coach's professional practice. It is specifically reflected in the ICF Code of Ethics that all ICF members and credentialed coaches abide by. The ICF has developed specific resources to help coaches better understand when to refer clients to therapy.

- No other state in the U.S. regulates coaching or defines it as an alternative therapy.

- Coaching has been an internationally recognized field for over 25 years and is now taught separately from psychology/therapy in universities across the country, including Georgetown University, Columbia University, New York University, and Rice University.

- Many Fortune 500 companies actively use coaching as a tool for professional development. In fact, many of the largest companies in the Pacific Northwest now have in-house coaching and coach training programs, including but not limited to: Nike, Adidas, Intel, Columbia Sportswear, OHSU, Providence Health & Services, Legacy Health Systems, Facebook, Microsoft, and Google. In addition, the U.S. Federal Government and many state governments actively use coaching to help support their employees in their professional development.

We urge you to gather additional information about the profession and industry of professional coaching and ask you to reconsider including “life coaches” in this broad-reaching bill.

Thank you,  
Kirsten Meneghello