

Submitter: Amber Caldera
On Behalf Of: Therapists
Committee: House Committee On Behavioral Health and Health Care
Measure: HB2455

I am a Licensed Clinical Social Worker with my own private practice. I have been helping clients in Portland and throughout the state since 2018. Please pass HB 2455. Access to mental health care, already unacceptably and cruelly low compared to other states, is getting more difficult because of the unjust and threatening audit process. Providers go out of business or avoid working with certain insurers due to the current obscure and unjust audit processes. Oregon needs more mental health providers to be available to provide care, not less.

With HB 2455 in place, it 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. This has created an unfair level of authority from the insurers or CCO to where they are often creating unrealistic barriers for providers to provide documentation with no standard of expectations or rules set, leading to denials.

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 over all number of recoupments in audits and allow therapists to do their trained job, which is providing therapy for people who are struggling with severe mental health issues.

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 change an ineffective system.

Best Regards,
Amber Caldera, LCSW