

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

My name is Robyn Gibbs and I am an LCSW (Licensed Clinical Social worker). I am writing to ask you to pass HB 2455. I have been a therapist since 1994. I worked in community mental health/non-profits for the majority of my career and just opened my individual private practice in January 2020. Before opening my practice, I spoke to colleagues who had been in private practice for numerous years to assess if I could take on the risks involved in a private practice. They all told me they had never been audited, and did not worry about large clawbacks from insurance companies. However, since starting my private practice, it seems that there has been a significant increase in private practice therapists being audited and being made to pay very large sums of money back to insurance companies for reasons they either do not understand or seem to be related to small clerical errors. I have spoken to several colleagues directly who have experienced these situations. In all cases, there were clerical errors that did not effect client treatment/should not have effected payment and could have been easily corrected if asked or the therapists were given no reasons or very vague reasons for the clawback. I have heard that not meeting medical necessity has been given for some as a reason, when this could not be objectively determined and was subjective on the part of the insurance company.

I consider on a daily basis that I may need to close my business and obtain a job, either within or out of the field, so that I can feel confident the money I earn will not be clawed back somewhere down the road. I have also put hours into developing forms that will pass based on what other clinicians seem to think will be necessary. Without more specific guidelines from insurance agencies, I have no way of knowing if this is all in vain and will even be helpful. It would pain me deeply to reduce my access as I am a strong believer in helping to increase access to mental health services. However, the amount of stress and realistic worry I have about being audited/losing money through clawbacks is very real.

HB 2455 will make the audit process more transparent, just, and rare which will make providers, such as myself, more willing to stay on provider panels and to remain in practice in Oregon to provide care to our most vulnerable citizens.

I ask that you please support HB 2455. Thank you for the opportunity to communicate with you about this very important issue.