

Submitter: Alycia Smith

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Behavioral Health and Health Care

Measure: HB2455

My name is Alycia Smith. I am a Licensed Clinical Social Worker, and I own a group practice in Gresham and Troutdale, Oregon. I have been a therapist for nearly 9 years and I've owned my practice for half of that time. My practice primarily serves youth and families, including LGBTQIA+ youth. As a group, we strive to provide accessible, quality services, and accepting insurance is one of the ways that we reduce barriers to care for our clients.

I am writing to ask you to pass HB 2455.

Over the prior 30 months, we have worked with six different insurance carriers, each of whom have their own expectations and standards for documentation. However, because these expectations are not clearly or openly communicated, we are uncertain how to proactively and beyond doubt ensure we are meeting their expectations, despite best efforts.

While my practice has not yet been audited, I live in considerable fear of this process. We have received multiple letters from a private insurer in the area reflecting that our use of certain CPT codes is too high. The tone of these letters seems to insinuate that continued use of the CPT codes at this frequency may trigger an audit, despite this being the most clinically appropriate level of care. After receiving the third letter of this variety, our team talked extensively about discontinuing our partnership with this insurance carrier. This was a decision that would have required nearly 60% of our clients to find new in-network providers.

The simple truth is this: If our practice were to perform unfavorably in an audit and be responsible for a large recoupment, it would absolutely put us out of business and abruptly leave our clients without care. And it would have this effect even if that poor performance were due to clerical errors, "statistical sampling" extrapolating the presence of errors, or lack of clarity regarding documentation requirements from an insurance carrier. It would have this effect even if we were providing quality, clinically appropriate care.

Partnering with insurance carriers is a critical component of the work we do. We want to have collaborative, effective relationships that allow us to care for our clients thoughtfully and meet the needs of insurance carriers thoroughly. HB 2455 helps us do this. HB 2455 would take the guesswork and the stress out of the audit process and allow us to focus our attention and energy where it really matters: On client care.

Thank you for the opportunity to write this letter in support of HB 2455. To protect our

clients, support the work we do, and ease the considerable stress of partnering with insurance carriers, I urge you to pass HB 2455. I am grateful for your support.

Alycia Smith, LCSW