

Submitter: Oriana Korol
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Senate Committee On Health Care
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB61

I am a licensed clinical social worker in private practice in Portland, Oregon. I started off working at a large agency, Albertina Kerr, which serves youth and people with developmental disabilities. I then worked at the center at heron Hill, which offers equine and Ecotherapy primarily to clients with OHP insurance. I am strongly committed to serving people with low incomes and/or disabilities and in my private practice over 90% of my clients have OHP. I am also in the process of expanding to a group practice.

I see primarily survivors of childhood abuse. Many of my clients are still children living with adopted or foster care families. Some are adults still in poverty whose trauma symptoms from childhood have gone untreated. There is a shortage of therapists serving this population and much of it in the private practice world has to do with a fear of clawbacks, of making clerical mistakes that lead to money needing to be returned. For a small business, this can be devastating. I have heard the horror stories. If my partner did not have a job in tech, I would probably would not have taken this risk and may not accept OHP because of the potential clawbacks.

The saddest part about this current system, is that many of the most experienced therapists are in private practice or a small group practice because they can make more money in this setting and have the most control over their treatment and schedule. Thus, when small businesses are afraid to accept OHP because of the audits, that is taking away the best clinicians from these clients that I believe need behavioral healthcare the most. I want to be able to refer my clients to other therapists if I go on leave. I don't want to have a long wait-list, knowing that families are not getting care when they need it. I want there to be more therapists willing to take ohp.

The clients that I serve will be better served if the fear around clawbacks decreases. This bill would help clarify the rules and create more consistency between the CCOs.

Thank you.