

Submitter: Stephanie Brell
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Senate Committee On Health Care
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB824

Dear Chair Patterson, Vice-Chair Hayden, and Members of the Senate Committee on Health Care,

I am Licensed Clinical Social Worker and Certified Alcohol and Drug Counselor and a member of the Western Oregon Mental Health Alliance (WOMHA). I am writing in support of SB 824 with the -1 amendment to allow the Department of Consumer and Business Services to continue collecting important data from insurers on behavioral health parity as required by HB 3046 (2021).

In the past my reimbursement rates from some insurance companies were stagnant, while costs pertinent to both supporting my business and my family continued to increase. This made me question how sustainable it would be to stay in network.

Since the passage of HB 3046 in 2021, I have seen reimbursement increases for the first time in many years. These increases have made it more sustainable to stay in network and provide services to clients with varying financial means. The reason I pursued a social work career, almost 30 years ago, was to contribute to the quality of life for all citizens, regardless of economic status. An increase in reimbursement rates allows me to do this.

Allowing the HB 3046 reporting requirements to end would allow some insurers to return to their previous practices of undervaluing behavioral health services and operating with inadequate behavioral health networks, which effectively discriminates against their members with behavioral health conditions. Please pass SB 824 with the -1 amendment to keep insurance company practices transparent and protect access to behavioral health care.

Respectfully,

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