

David Ryan, LCSW

Connections First, LLC
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Dear Chair Pham and Members of the Behavioral Health Committee,

I am writing on behalf of Connections First, a community-based mental health group practice providing outpatient behavioral health services to clients throughout Oregon, to express our strong support for House Bill 4028.

Connections First serves individuals, couples, children, and families across a range of clinical needs. Like many small and mid-sized behavioral health providers, we operate with limited administrative capacity while maintaining a strong commitment to ethical practice, clinical quality, and accessibility of care. In recent years, however, increasingly aggressive and inconsistent insurance audit practices have placed significant financial and operational strain on our clinicians and administrative staff.

Audits have become more frequent and more punitive, often relying on documentation standards that shift over time or lack clarity. Even when services are medically necessary and appropriately delivered, minor technical issues can result in retroactive denials or repayment demands. These practices introduce ongoing financial uncertainty and divert substantial clinical and administrative resources away from direct patient care.

The cumulative effect of this environment contributes to clinician burnout and pushes many providers to leave insurance networks or exit the profession altogether. When behavioral health providers are forced out of the system, access to care for insured patients is reduced—particularly for those already facing barriers to mental health services.

HB 4028 acknowledges the imbalance of power that currently exists between insurers and small or independent behavioral health providers, as well as the growing pattern of retroactive denials and recoupments for legitimately rendered services. By establishing clearer standards and reasonable safeguards, the bill helps restore fairness and predictability to the audit process.

Passage of HB 4028 will promote provider sustainability, strengthen insurer networks, and ultimately protect access to behavioral health care for communities across Oregon. It allows clinicians and agencies like ours to remain focused on our core mission: delivering effective, compassionate mental health care.

Thank you for your leadership and your continued commitment to safeguarding access to behavioral health services in our state. We respectfully urge your support of HB 4028.

Sincerely,



David Ryan, LCSW
Connections First, LLC