

Submitter: Maria Alejandra De Araujo Sanchez
On Behalf Of:
Committee: House Committee On Behavioral Health
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB4028
Oregon House Committee on Behavioral Health

February 2nd, 2026

Re: Support for HB 4028 – Protecting Mental Health Providers and Patient Access

Dear Members of the Behavioral Health Committee,

My name is Maria-Alejandra De Araujo Sanchez, and I am a clinical social worker, a mental health provider, and the owner of a small mental health group practice in Oregon. I am writing to express my strong support for HB 4028.

Documentation expectations imposed by insurance carriers are often unclear and vary significantly from one carrier to another. Many insurers state in their contracts that providers are required to follow “policies,” yet those policies may be changed at any time, often without clear or direct notification. As a result, when we sign contracts, we do not necessarily know which documentation standards we are agreeing to, nor are we consistently informed when those standards change, particularly when changes affect documentation requirements.

Although I have not personally experienced a clawback, I have heard from many colleagues who have. Knowing that payment for ethically delivered, medically necessary care could potentially be questioned or reversed long after services are provided makes it difficult to feel secure, and, at times, difficult to sleep at night. Because of this uncertainty, providers are incentivized to approach documentation with extreme caution. We spend significant amounts of time ensuring that notes are exhaustive and defensible, not because it improves patient care, but because we are trying to protect ourselves from future financial risk. This pulls hours away from direct patient care, limits the number of clients we can responsibly see, and undermines our sense of professional stability.

As a practice owner, this instability has broader implications. My practice currently has a long waitlist, and I could meaningfully improve access to care by hiring additional therapists. However, the ongoing fear of retroactive denials or payment reversals makes it extremely difficult to plan responsibly or feel confident that revenue earned today will remain available to support future payroll and operating costs. This uncertainty directly limits my ability to grow my practice and expand access for patients who are already waiting for care.

HB 4028 addresses these issues in a thoughtful and balanced way. By requiring clearer documentation standards, reasonable audit timelines, and guardrails around retroactive reviews, the bill introduces much-needed transparency and predictability into a system where small practices currently bear disproportionate risk.

These protections allow providers to focus on delivering high-quality care rather than practicing in a constant state of financial anxiety. When mental health providers are unable to sustain their practices, patients ultimately lose access to care.

I strongly urge you to support HB 4028 and appreciate your attention to the realities faced by frontline mental health providers across Oregon.

Sincerely,

Maria-Alejandra De Araujo Sanchez, LCSW