

Subject

Support for HB 4028 – Behavioral Health ProtectionSupport for HB 4028 – Behavioral Health Protection

Dear Members of the Legislature,

My name is Michelle Brenneman. I am an independent licensed professional counselor and the owner of a small private practice here in Oregon. I am writing in strong support of HB 4028, the Behavioral Health Protection Bill.

I love my work and feel deeply committed to serving my community, but the reality of working with insurance as a behavioral health provider has become increasingly stressful. More and more of my time is being pulled away from client care and into responding to documentation demands, and confusing “medical management” requirements that are rarely explained clearly up front. Every hour I spend fearfully defending already-provided care is an hour taken away from someone who is waiting for help.

What makes our work especially stressful is the financial risk. Under current law, insurers can reach back years later and take back payments, sometimes with very little notice. For small practices like mine, one large clawback can be devastating. I do not have a large administrative team or a financial cushion. I am often just one, less than one, unexpected recoupment away from serious hardship. I know many excellent clinicians who have left insurance panels entirely, not because they want to, but because they feel they have no other way to survive. As clinicians, we do this work because we care about our communities’ health and wellbeing.

But when clinicians leave panels, the clients lose. They face higher out-of-pocket costs, fewer in-network options, and longer waits for care. At a time when Oregon is trying to expand behavioral health access, the current system is quietly pushing providers out. Let’s Oregon be a leader in mental health and show the rest of the nation that we care.

HB 4028 offers thoughtful, practical protections that would make a real difference. Greater transparency about what insurers are doing under the label of “medical management,” reasonable time limits on audits and clawbacks, protection from harsh penalties over simple clerical errors, and the ability to use repayment plans instead of sudden financial hits would help stabilize small practices like mine. These changes don’t remove accountability; they create fairness and predictability so we can focus on our actual job, caring for people.

I want to stay in the network. I want my services to be affordable and accessible. Bills like HB 4028 make that more possible.

Please support this legislation. It is not only about protecting providers, it is about protecting access to behavioral health care for the people of Oregon.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Michelle Brenneman, MA, LPC
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