

Submitter: April Esry
On Behalf Of:
Committee: House Committee On Behavioral Health
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB4028

Dear Chair Pham and Members of the Behavioral Health Committee

My name is April Esry, and I am a Licensed Professional Counselor working at Freedom Counseling Centre LLC in Central Point/Medford, Oregon. I am writing to express my strong support for HB 4028.

This bill provides essential protection for small and independent mental health providers against increasingly aggressive and predatory insurance practices. Each year, insurance audits grow more frequent and more punitive, requiring extensive time and energy to ensure every detail of my documentation meets shifting and often unclear standards. Despite providing ethical, necessary, and high-quality care, I live with the constant fear that a minor technical error could result in denied claims or repayment demands.

This ongoing threat of lost income creates significant stress and instability. Like many providers, I have seriously considered leaving insurance networks—or even the profession entirely—because of these pressures. When therapists are pushed out in this way, it is ultimately patients who suffer. The last year of OHP/Jackson Care Connect changes have amplified this for me, I can no longer consider shifting towards a group and expanding into a more holistic care model due to the closed panels and severe cut in reimbursements.

HB 4028 recognizes that insurance companies currently hold disproportionate power over small and solo mental health providers. It acknowledges the growing pattern of retroactive denials and recoupments for legitimately delivered services, and it takes meaningful steps to address this imbalance.

By establishing reasonable protections and clearer standards, HB 4028 will help providers remain financially stable, continue serving insured clients, and focus on what matters most: delivering high-quality mental health care to Oregonians. This bill supports both providers and the communities we serve. This last year, I have watched the systematic reduction to access of care in the mental health field. The increased costs of health insurance, deductibles, the gutting of Medicaid have been detrimental to clients and providers. As a mom of two disabled children, they have lost their primary care doctor as well as access to their mental health therapists due to these Medicaid changes. I have dozens of clients who lost access to their primary care physicians. We cannot continue to put this field at risk, our communities pay too high a price. I built a practice to meet clients where they are, that often means phone

calls at 10pm on a Saturday to help them out of their crisis rather than them ending up in the Emergency Department. As providers, it is our responsibility to provide the best support we possibly can for our clients, I think it is only reasonable to ask our representatives to have our back and support us in making our jobs a little less stressful in one of the most distressing times in recent history.

Thank you for your leadership and for your support of HB 4028. I appreciate your commitment to protecting access to mental health care across our state.

Sincerely,

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