

Dear Chair Patterson and Members of the Senate Committee on Health Care:

My name is Elisabeth Herrera, I am the President of the Coalition of Oregon Professional Associations for Counseling and Therapy (COPACT). COPACT supports HB 4028.

It is important that fraud is detected and restricted and for that reason, I support insurance audits for behavioral health care. Insurance audits must not be used as a tactic to harass and deny rightful provider claims or recoup payment based on arbitrary or simple clerical errors, or errors created when the insurers change requirements without first informing providers in a timely manner.

HB 4028 addresses several key gaps in the way insurers conduct audits that have long impacted mental health care providers and other healthcare professionals. It requires the insurers to offer clear, written guidelines regarding what constitute rightful vs. wrongful claims, and the basis for conducting audits and recoupment of payments made in the past. It allows providers to practice their profession in an ethical manner without undergoing undue financial hardship and stress of being audited and asked to pay back past payments for frivolous reasons. It also requires some carriers to annually report to the Department of Consumer and Business Services to ensure that there is compliance with behavioral health care parity requirements as compared to other healthcare services.

HB 4028 is a crucial bill for ensuring Oregon's mental health providers can offer continuous care without undergoing undue financial hardship. I urge the committee to pass HB 4028 as a common-sense measure that will support providers, prevent fraud and allow the community to access services they desperately need.

Thank you for listening and supporting this bill.