

Rosenberg Corey

From: Katje Wagner <katjewagner@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, March 08, 2017 8:02 PM
To: SHS Exhibits
Subject: Support SB 860

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing to ensure that my support for SB 860 is part of the official legislative record. I am psychotherapist with a license as a professional counselor, as well as a PhD in Clinical and Somatic Psychology. I've been practicing for over 10 years in Portland, Oregon, and feel deeply grateful to be able to serve the mental and behavioral healthcare needs of my community.

However, both my clients and fellow colleagues have been harmed by the poor enforcement of Oregon's Mental Health Parity Law. Clients need access to healthcare that views mental health as integral to the well-being of all people. Insurance companies need to ensure that mental healthcare is affordable and equitably supported, such that clients are actually able to receive the support they need. At the same time, if mental health parity is not enforced, providers also suffer. Mental health providers need to be equitably paid and reimbursed for their services in order to be able to provide those services. It's as simple as that.

Taking myself as an example, I was able to serve numerous clients at low-cost who had BlueCross BlueShield. However in Fall 2015, I was informed by BCBS that their reimbursement rates were being dramatically cut by over 25%!!! After reviewing the financial viability of my practice, I had no choice but to discontinue my contract with BCBS - otherwise there would be no way that I could afford to stay in business. The consequence being that the majority of my BCBS clients had to discontinue because they could not afford to pay out-of-network amounts. What a bind! I believe in healthcare insurance and pride myself on being able to offer high quality mental health services to clients at affordable cost - when clients only need to pay a \$20-30 or less co-pay, and providers reimbursed at equitable rates, then health insurance is doing its job! When those rates are ridiculously and unreasonably cut, then everybody loses.

That is why I am asking you to STAND UP for MENTAL HEALTH PARITY and SUPPORT SB 860!!

Thank you.

Sincerely,
Dr Katje Wagner

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