

## Rosenberg Corey

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**From:** Tamara Webb <tamara@fivebodiescounseling.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 08, 2017 9:33 PM  
**To:** SHS Exhibits  
**Subject:** SB 860

Esteemed Members of the Senate Committee on Human Services,

I am writing to urge passage of SB 860, an effort to reinforce the intentions of Mental Health Parity legislation in Oregon. As a Licensed Professional Counselor who serves many clients using insurance for their treatment, I have witnessed a scandalous, overly aggressive push by certain insurers to limit the use of typical treatment approaches, particularly trying to reinforce shorter therapy sessions (45 minutes in length) when the professional standard has long-been 50-60 minutes in length. It may not seem like much of a difference to you — unless you've ever been a client receiving counseling — but this particular restriction *does often interfere* with the use of appropriate and effective counseling interventions. It is unfair to patients and providers that we should have to conduct behavioral health treatments, so often of a sensitive nature, with only the limitations of an insurance company in mind, rather than what's appropriate for the patient's situation.

From my end professionally, I have chosen to restrict my private practice to insurers who do not engage in such aggressive tactics — e.g., excessive and unnecessary auditing of a patient's records, refusal to pay for common procedural codes (in particular 90837: 53-60 minute counseling sessions), reduction of reimbursement amounts for contracted providers to dissuade use of 90837 as opposed to 90843 (45-minute sessions). But not everyone, in particular those insured under the plans, has the option to decline. These tactics, carried out against independent providers/small business owners, leave no room for negotiation and unnecessarily curtail treatment not based on evidence-based practices or appropriate interventions, but just solely based on rationing of care and cost containment. I urge you to approve SB 860 so these concerns can be adequately investigated and remedied, to assure proper patient care and equal treatment of health care professionals in the state of Oregon. Thank you!

Sincerely,  
Tamara Webb

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