

Timeline of Past 2 years

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Overview of the

Journey toward Parity

June 2009 – House Bill 2506A passes the senate vote 25-3 (with 2 excused) after being introduced by Sen. Bill Morrisette (D), followed swiftly by a passing House concurrence vote introduced by Rep. Carolyn Tomei (D). **Governor Ted Kulongoski to sign passage. Bill will go into effect January 1, 2010.**

October 2008-June 2009 – OAMFT applies for grant funds from AAMFT to help pay for lobbyists Elizabeth Cushwa and Kristen Leonard of C & E Systems. The lobbyists are hired for the full year's session January through June 2009 via the Coalition; OAMFT works alongside *The Oregon Coalition for Consumer Mental Health Protection & Choice 2009*, a grassroots coalition made up of LPCs and LMFTs to promote the accessibility, affordability & consumer protection scope of practice bill.

February 2008 – Special session convenes and Rep. Carolyn Tomei (D), introduces the bill for vote. It fails passage by 2 votes. OAMFT funds lobbyist (above mentioned) for this one month session via a grant from AAMFT.

2007-2008 – OAMFT (President- Elect, President) Marcus Berglund, LMFT, works multiple hours creating relationships within the legislative body, helping to educate lawmakers on the need for a bill which defines parity and protection.

Marylou Brophy, LPC, begins a grassroots effort to create greater dynamic dialogue for the passage of a bill.

Overview: The passage of a parity bill has been ongoing for approximately 15 years. OAMFT could not possibly accurately name all the wonderful members and fellow mental health professionals that have given countless hours and energies toward this end. Every OAMFT President, since its origins, has given great focus to this work! Many legislators also, have placed much energy, work and dialogue over the years toward an attempt to ensure that Oregonians are both granted access to services and protected in their rights.

So how was this achieved? Dedication; relationships; respectful dialogue; an openness to feedback from important members such as OPA & LCSWs, as well as insurance companies; strong legal advice; national organizations support and information; patience, patience, patience!; and more communication via sit-downs over coffee, meetings, lunches, emails, and handwritten thank-you notes.

The victory of the passage of this bill does not belong to a small group of persons but to all of us. We have fought a good fight; we have been passionate about a worthy cause, and Oregonians throughout our entire state will benefit from it!

Congratulations to us all!

Shelley Hanson on behalf of the 2009 OAMFT Board