

Name: Cortney Rouse

Date: 2/12/2019

Subject: Oregon Association of Naturopathic Physicians Pay Parity Bill

Dear Senate and Health Care Committees,

My name is Cortney Rouse and I own a medical billing company which serves alternative healthcare providers, including naturopathic doctors. I would like to share my experience working with naturopaths and their businesses to show the importance of this profession in the delivery of quality healthcare in the state of Oregon.

I have two decades of personal experience receiving treatment from naturopathic doctors and being educated about my health in addition to being treated for various ailments and injuries. In my experience the approach of an ND is personal, detailed, holistic and root cause focused.

I also have five years of experience providing billing services and office support services to naturopathic doctors in and around Portland Oregon and it has become quite obvious that there is a greater demand for their services than there used to be. It is evident in the inclusion of alternative medicine benefit requirements set out by the ACA in 2014 and in the growing number of states that consider an ND to be at the same level as their MD counterparts. Moreover there are a significant amount of patients seen by NDs who do not have insurance to cover those services and opt to see them in spite of having the benefits to see an MD or their PCP. The time spent with patients and even more so the time spent educating patients has become such a valuable service that is provided by the ND community and is often lacking in the major medical community.

Here's what I've learned in my two decades in healthcare – healing is healing no matter what label you put on it. I personally have a PCP through Providence who is an MD and the advice I have received from him over the years has become more and more holistic, and for a good reason. The value of natural medicine becomes more and more apparent as we see strains of infection that have become resistant to antibiotics, years of damage from prescription pills that could've otherwise been avoided with a more natural approach and the fact that the education is beginning to be used by the major medical community. Many see this as a dilution of the naturopathic profession, blaming major medical for using their methods and calling them their own. I see it as proof that the education and service that a naturopath provides to their patients is equal to that of a medical doctor and therefore should be treated as such, from requirements on the scope of practice to reimbursement rates. I have personal experience seeing NDs getting paid much less than their MD counterparts (and at times not at all!) for the very same service and having to jump through ridiculous regulation hoops to be paid for a service that is automatically paid for as MD. This is unfair, unjust, and just plain rude.

Please, ask your friends and family if they've seen a naturopathic doctor and what their experience was before voting on this bill. Find out just how much the community needs these healthcare providers before voting on this bill. I think you will find that the time for treating these doctors as equal to the medical doctors is now. I am asking that you vote yes on the Naturopathic Physician Pay Parity bill.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Courtney Rouse". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looped initial "C".

Courtney Rouse
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