

Senate Committee on Health Care

Chair Monnes Anderson:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of SB734.

I have been a licensed Naturopathic physician since 2010. Thanks to the work of legislators and policymakers, including some of you, I have been fortunate to have seen and participated in an expanding scope of practice ensuring that Oregon residents have the choice to see the primary care provider of their choosing, including naturopathic physicians.

Not long after I became licensed, I started work in a multi-disciplinary clinic which included an MD, DC, LAc, and other providers. We practiced team-based care and became a Tier 3 Patient Centered Primary Care Home (PCPCH) in 2011, which was the highest level at that time. This was the result of a lot of hard work and support from our patients who appreciated the holistic approach of care that we provided.

Unfortunately, the insurance reimbursement did not follow the increase in responsibility. I saw patients for primary care visits whose co-pay was higher than the allowed amount from the insurance company. You may ask why I credentialed with a company that offered such low reimbursement rates, and the answer is simple. We were practicing a team-based care model. This model of care in the PCPCH is enhanced when all providers are on the same insurance panels, ensuring that patients can receive quality care from all providers without worry of surprise bills. The disparities in MD and ND reimbursement are fully appreciated with this model of care, as we were providing the same care, but with vastly different reimbursements. Ultimately, my position at the clinic was eliminated due to the lack of financial sustainability directly related to low insurance reimbursements for care provided by an ND.

Since then, I have worked in health care in a variety of capacities, but have not been able to afford to build a practice again. My years in training, education, and experience are not being utilized in direct patient care.

Oregonians deserve to have choices in their providers and naturopathic physicians should be able to practice to the top of their license without fear of losing money due to small insurance payments. I want to go back into private practice to treat patients again and SB734 will allow me to do this.

Please support SB734.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,
Sara Love, ND