

Name: Lisa Matejka

Date: February 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2019

Subject: Oregon Association of Naturopathic Physicians Pay Parity Bill

Dear Senate and Health Care Committees,

My name is Lisa Matejka and I am a Naturopathic Physician. I would like to share my experience working as an ND to show the importance of this profession in the delivery of quality healthcare in the state of Oregon, and the barriers that we face in trying to deliver this care. I recently started my own practice, and opted not to accept health insurance of any kind. This is not a terribly uncommon move. My reason is that as much as I sincerely want to reach and be accessible to everybody, especially lower socioeconomic status, I am terrified by the horror stories of ND's not getting paid by insurance companies for services performed that do qualify to be reimbursed. Those of us who are starting our own practice, often times are not much better off financially than our patients, and so can not withstand this unjust blow. I've heard of insurance companies employing dozens of dirty tricks to not have to pay ND's. I do not know if they think us unworthy of the money they reimburse to MD's, or if there is ignorance and they just do not understand the law. Either way, we need your help. We ought to be paid for services performed that do qualify.

I am asking that you vote yes on the Naturopathic Physician Pay Parity bill.

Sincerely,

Lisa Matejka, ND, MS

Teresa True, ND  
02/04/2019  
Subject: OANP Physicians Pay Parity Bill

Dear Senate and Health Care Committees.

My name is Teresa True and I am a Naturopathic Physician. I would like to share my experience working as an ND to show the importance of this profession in the delivery of quality healthcare in the state of Oregon, and the barriers that we face in trying to deliver this care.

Much of my patient population is those who are tired of their conditions simply being “managed” by pharmaceuticals. They desire to restore their health and alleviate their dependence on these medications. I am very successful at helping to not only reduce, but often eliminate their prescription needs from chronic, lifestyle related conditions such as high cholesterol, high blood pressure, weight loss, and type 2 diabetes. Cardiovascular disease alone kills 610,000 people every year, and simply being on a prescription medication is the 4<sup>th</sup> leading cause of death in the United States. These statistics should be staggering, and call for a change in how health care, or “disease management” is handled in this country.

But today I’m not asking for you to overhaul healthcare in America. I’m asking to be paid equally for the time and attention I take to educate and transform my patient’s lives for the healthier and reduce their dependence on continued pharmacologic management and increased health care costs with hospitalization and surgeries. I spent 12 years in education and residency learning how to do this safely and effectively, the same as my MD/DO colleagues, who often refer to me to help meet the needs of their patients desiring a change in their health. It is not feasible to run a business, providing many of the same screening services in addition to the time and effort it takes to restore a person’s normal health and function, but on reimbursement rates as much as 40% less than what my counterparts receive.

The people of Oregon want to have a choice in their healthcare, and this is evident in the fact Naturopathic Physicians have been licensed here since 1927. By not having equal pay in our services, many practices will have to make the difficult choice to no longer accept insurance reimbursement, and force patients to pay at the time of service. This will make our services unreachable for many people who are already paying incredible amounts for health insurance premiums, deductibles and copays, and then unable to afford the medical services they desire.

I am asking that you vote yes on the Naturopathic Physicians Pay Parity Bill.

Thank you,



Teresa True, ND

Name: Lisa Taulbee

Date: February 13, 2019

Subject: Oregon Association of Naturopathic Physicians Pay Parity Bill

Dear Senate and Health Care Committees,

My name is Lisa Taulbee and I am a Naturopathic Physician. I would like to share my experience working with as an ND to show the importance of this profession in the delivery of quality healthcare in the state of Oregon, and the barriers that we face in trying to deliver this care.

- I graduated from NUNM, an accredited naturopathic college and completed 3 years of residency in primary care and women's health
- I work on a daily basis with all provider types including medical doctors, doctor of osteopathy, physician's assistants and nurse practitioners, receiving referrals to provide care to patients from these providers regularly
- My practice is part of a medical entity that provides many types of care including urgent care, internal medicine, several specialties and pediatrics. I focus on women's health with many of my visits involving contraception counseling and initiation, in-office procedures such as colposcopy and annual wellness exams.
- Naturopaths fill a need in the community for primary care, using both conventional and natural therapies.
- Reimbursement rates impact my practice tremendously. I am not able to accept several insurers due to the low reimbursement rates, which means that there are many patients whom I cannot provide care to that need help. It is challenging to keep a practice open when there is such discrepancy in reimbursement and my position is regularly in jeopardy due to this issue.

I am asking that you vote yes on the Naturopathic Physician Pay Parity bill.

Sincerely,

Lisa Taulbee, ND

Name: Aimee Bonneval  
Date: February 12, 2019  
Subject: Oregon Association of Naturopathic Physicians Pay Parity Bill

Dear Senate and Health Care Committees,

My name is Aimée Bonneval and I am a Naturopathic Physician (NUNM, c/o 2014). I would like to share my experience working as an ND to show the importance of this profession in the delivery of quality healthcare in the state of Oregon, and the barriers that we face in trying to deliver this care.

My medical education consisted of a 6 year program for dual licensure as a naturopath and acupuncturist. I spent one additional year completing a general practice residency with a focus on reproductive and digestive health. This education allows me to serve as a primary care provider for many (but not all) insurance plans, and requires that I follow the same guidelines for patient care as other provider types, including but not limited to other mid-level practitioners.

Like my MD, DO, NP and PA colleagues, I am qualified and licensed to: prescribe and manage medications, run diagnostic and screening labs, order diagnostic and screening imaging procedures, and diagnose patients with medical conditions.

Additionally, the majority of my treatments plans are developed from evidence based medicine and include dietary counseling, medication management, and recommendations of specific herbal and Vitamin therapies. Most visits last between 45 to 60 minutes in order to allow for discussion around treatment plans and options for care. This is what I believe makes naturopathic care unique: our ability to offer individualized medicine because of a strong doctor-patient relationship, as well as a variety of treatment options tailored to each patient.

The current discrepancy in pay creates an undue burden on naturopathic physicians providing primary care services, as we often operate at a loss when performing standard services such as gynecologic exams due to a "cap" on payment, as well as limiting patient options for the type of provider they choose to see. I truly believe that eliminating the pay gap between NDs and other healthcare providers will improve the quality of patient care as it will enable us to: hire support staff, such as medical assistants, to relieve administrative burdens and allow us to focus on patient care; allow more providers establish Patient Centered Primary Care Homes within their clinics; and increase to presence of primary care provides, particularly in under-served communities.

I am asking that you vote yes on the SB 734.

Sincerely,

Aimée O. Bonneval

Name: Alexandra Christopoulos, ND

Date: 2/13/19

Subject: Oregon Association of Naturopathic Physicians Pay Parity Bill

Dear Senate and Health Care Committees,

My name is Alexandra Christopoulos and I am a Naturopathic Physician. I would like to share my experience working as an ND to show the importance of this profession in the delivery of quality healthcare in the state of Oregon, and the barriers that we face in trying to deliver this care.

A doctorate in Natural Medicine is a full 4 year medical program with potential for a residency, which is more education than either Nurse Practitioners or Physician Assistant's receive.

I work for ZoomCare, providing urgent and primary care to patients in the Portland metro area. I work in the same capacity as both Nurse Practitioners and Physician's Assistants and provide the same or better quality of care, but because insurance does not reimburse at the same rate I am paid almost \$40,000 a year less than my colleagues who do the exact same job. I also have many colleagues in private practice and struggling to earn wages to support their families because insurance reimbursement is so low. Many of us can't afford to pay our student debt with our current income.

With today's lack of primary care providers, NDs help to fill this critical role, but our ability to do so is severely limited by insurance reimbursement rates. We are asking for fair and equal reimbursement for fair and equal work.

I am asking that you vote yes on the Naturopathic Physician Pay Parity bill.

Sincerely,

Alexandra Christopoulos, ND

Name: Date: Subject: Oregon Association of Naturopathic  
Physicians Pay Parity Bill

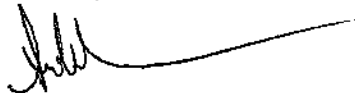
Dear Senate and Health Care  
Committees,

My name is Andrew Murison and I am a Naturopathic Physician I would like to share my experience working with as an ND to show the importance of this profession in the delivery of quality healthcare in the state of Oregon, and the barriers that we face in trying to deliver this care.

I have been in the primary care field for over 8 year. I have seen hundreds of patients and managed their care. In this time, both my patients and myself have suffered due to the discrimination that we have faced as a Naturopathic doctor. As insurance companies coverage and reimbursement significantly limit my ability to see and manage these patient. Because of this discrimination by these insurance companies it is extremely difficult to afford to see many of these patients. This greatly limits their ability to choose a provider that best matches their care need. In addition this also reduces the number of provider that a patient has a choice to see in general. Oregon already suffers from a significant lack of primary care provider to care for even the most basic of health care need. Having equal pay and benefit allows us to continue to the great care that we already provide and ensures that we fill in the blanks that Oregon and the nation truly needs.

I am asking that you vote yes on the Naturopathic Physician Pay Parity bill.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Andrew Murison', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Andrew Murison, ND



4246 SE Belmont St, Suite 5  
Portland, OR 97215  
T 503.445.8114  
F 503.445.1394  
[www.grainintegrativehealth.com](http://www.grainintegrativehealth.com)

Name: Ashly Benson

Date: 02-13-2019

Subject: Oregon Association of Naturopathic Physicians Pay Parity Bill

Dear Senate and Health Care Committees,

My name is Ashly Benson and I am a Naturopathic Physician. I would like to share my experience working with as an ND to show the importance of this profession in the delivery of quality healthcare in the state of Oregon, and the barriers that we face in trying to deliver this care. I completed a four year post-graduate medical program at a nationally accredited naturopathic medical school, the National University of Natural Medicine. I am currently in my second year of a primary care focused residency that is accredited by the Council on Naturopathic Medical Education. The clinic that I work for serves as a primary care facility for Care Oregon Medicaid patients in addition to many other insurance panels. Insured patients make up 80% of our over 6,000 patients and we are currently working on opening a second location in Cascade Locks where there is no access to medical care. We provide integrative treatments that include dietary, lifestyle, botanical, nutrient, and pharmaceutical use when indicated in hopes of not only treating but also preventing chronic disease. Our goal is to find the root cause of illness or disease, provide counseling on the best approach to treat that cause, and most importantly, educate patients about their health and what they can do to improve it. Our integrative approach also includes a broad referral network with the allopathic medical community in Portland as we find that collaboration with MD providers and specialists leads to the best care for our patients.

I have chosen to do primary care at a clinic that accepts insurance in order to provide access to this unique form of care to the greatest number of patients, despite the financial burden this imposes. My current student loan burden is more than \$300,000 and primary care physicians experience some of the highest rates of burnout in the medical community. Reimbursement rates for naturopathic doctors are 60% that of MD or DOs who do similar care and bill the same CPT codes. The financial stress due to large student loan burden, poor reimbursement rates, and overhead costs for running small private clinics weigh heavily on those of us in the Naturopathic field who offer primary care service and choose to take insurance as a means of providing access to our unique offerings. With better reimbursement rates, small clinics would be able to hire more support staff to improve the quality of care we are able to provide patients, become more sustainable in the healthcare field, and provide services to a greater number of patients.

I am asking that you vote yes on the Naturopathic Physician Pay Parity bill.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ashly Benson", with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Ashly Benson, ND



Bonny Seal, ND  
Practicing at Althea Wellness Clinic  
14535 Westlake Dr. Ste B | Lake Oswego, OR 97035  
Tel. 503.941.9348 | Fax 503.607.8661

Name: Bonny Seal, ND

Date: 2.12.2019

Subject: Oregon Association of Naturopathic Physicians Pay Parity Bill

Dear Senate and Health Care Committees,

My name is Dr. Bonny Seal and have been a Naturopathic Physician for the past eight years. I would like to share my experience working as an ND to show the importance of this profession in the delivery of quality healthcare in the state of Oregon and the barriers that we face in trying to deliver this care.

- Naturopathic Education is a four year post graduate level degree. Our education is extensive. The first two years are focused on basic sciences similar to that of conventional medical school; years three and four continue with conventional training in pharmacy, genetics, neurology, cardiology, oncology, minor surgery, pediatrics, etc. In addition to this training we have two years of nutrition, four years of botanical medicine training, 2-4 years of homeopathy, and hydrotherapy plus clinical training. Additionally, we are required to complete 35 hours of continuing education yearly. We are rooted in our philosophy that the body, mind and spirit are connected and that we must continue to look at the whole while focusing on a part. We trust in the body's innate ability to heal and we look for obstacles that hinder this process and remove them.
- As an ND I look at my role in a patient's health as part of a team including the patient as well as other allied health professionals.
- In my practice I work with all ages often as a specialist and sometimes as a primary care physician. Patients have the time to discuss their health, their challenges and we find solutions together to meet them where they are and support them as a whole being allowing them to gain greater wellness. You can imagine that this specialized care takes time and resources.
- As an ND in Oregon I am able to use the full breadth of my training. While in my particular practice I focus on using natural therapies first I do at times need to prescribe medications or taper them. I am able to utilize both basic and specialty labs as well as order diagnostic imaging to best understand what is going on with a patient.
- In order to make naturopathic care available to more people, I am credentialed with multiple insurance companies. However, I've had to drop the lowest reimbursing companies because it ends up costing me money. For example, one company's allowable amount is \$30 for a 99214 (detailed exam, moderate decision making, 25





Bonny Seal, ND  
Practicing at Althea Wellness Clinic  
14535 Westlake Dr. Ste B | Lake Oswego, OR 97035  
Tel. 503.941.9348 | Fax 503.607.8661

minutes). While I spend 30-45 minutes with patients, the average medical doctor visit is 7 minutes.

- When insurance companies are allowed to have such low reimbursement rates it's the patients who lose out on the opportunity to choose naturopathic care. Often patients can't afford to pay their premium and out of network costs for NDs out of network. The patients I see are wanting to get off medications, learn how to live healthier lives for themselves and their children, as well as try and prevent chronic diseases such cardiovascular disease, type 2 diabetes etc. This can't happen in 7 min or at \$30 per visit.
- I've invested many years, thousands and thousands of dollars because I'm passionate about providing excellent care and helping people live their healthiest versions. However, the reality is that I also have a family to provide for and I deserve to be paid for the service I am providing.
- Patient's deserve a choice in their healthcare and providers deserve to be fairly compensated. We are not asking for more, we are asking to be reimbursed fairly.

I am asking that you vote yes on the Naturopathic Physician Pay Parity bill.

Sincerely,

  
Bonny Seal, ND

Name: Brittany Long

Date: 2/13/09

Subject: Oregon Association of Naturopathic Physicians Pay Parity Bill

Dear Senate and Health Care Committees,

My name is Brittany Long and I am a newly licensed Naturopathic Physician. I would like to share my experience working as an ND to show the importance of this profession in the delivery of quality healthcare in the state of Oregon, and the barriers that we face in trying to deliver this care.

Naturopathic medical school is a rigorous and nationally accredited practice of medicine and in Oregon. Naturopathic doctors are recognized and legally permitted to treat as primary care physicians, yet we are sorely under-reimbursed by insurance companies. This not only puts stress on us as individual providers in making ends meet (as our student loan debt is usually equivalent to that of an MD upon graduation) but more importantly it puts undue stress on our patients as they can be restricted in seeing a naturopathic provider due to the cost that may be associated with seeing a naturopathic provider when they are out of network. This out of network occurrences tends to occur more frequently than it should because even though we can be licensed primary care providers, in order to actually keep some of our practices open, doctors are having to make the difficult decision to only accept certain insurance as to accept certain insurances would mean within 5-10 years the clinic would have to be closed due to too high of overhead costs.

Being a new provider it is also extremely stressful that we are following standard of care measures, acting as primary care providers and yet we are not reimbursed in such a way.

I am asking that you vote yes on the Naturopathic Physician Pay Parity bill.

Sincerely,

Brittany Long, ND

Alive & Well Healing Arts  
Dr. Daivati Bharadvaj, Naturopathic Physician  
1675 SW Marlow Ave #307, Portland OR 97225 503.484.8647 fax 503.530.8174

February 5, 2019

Oregon Association of Naturopathic Physicians Pay Parity Bill

Dear Senate and Health Care Committees,

My name is Daivati Bharadvaj and I am a Naturopathic Physician. I would like to share my experience as an ND to show the importance of my profession in delivering high quality healthcare in the state of Oregon, and the barriers that we face in trying to deliver this care.

Naturopathic physicians are trained for four (or more) years in medical schools to earn our licenses to provide primary care medicine. We participate in internships, residencies, focused specializations, and continuing education every year to advance our knowledge and refine our expertise. We strive to be the kind of doctors who take the time to listen, provide comprehensive exams, and offer diverse therapeutic solutions. Our patients report feeling comfortable with sharing the most important and intimate aspects of their health: their deepest pain, greatest goals, and even personal struggles. Beyond that, we are family physicians who regularly collaborate with other health care providers such as MD's, DO's, nurses, and specialists. These same providers refer to us as trusted and respected peers within the network of healthcare providers.

In my practice over the past 14 years, I have worked with hundreds of individuals, families, children, and elders. My patients come from diverse ethnic, religious, cultural, and language backgrounds, and they appreciate that I can relate to their journeys. I offer hour-long sessions to each of my patients, to allow enough time to get to the heart of their medical concerns. While many institutions are strained in maximizing volume of patients seen in a day, most ND's offer a more relaxed atmosphere to give quality care that does not feel rushed. Beyond the standard of care practices in pharmaceuticals and procedures, we also support our patients with nutrition and dietary intervention, botanical medicines, lifestyle counseling and stress management. We go above and beyond to ensure completeness of preventive care and optimal wellness. With our care, our patients with chronic conditions enjoy long term healing and recovery.

This is why it is so unfortunate to be slapped with low reimbursement rates by insurance companies on a daily basis. It undermines our profession and our individual hard work when we see our MD, DO, Nurse Practitioner, and Physician Assistant colleagues getting paid more than we do, despite our equal training and scope of practice. When I am faced with poor reimbursement, it becomes difficult to continue to practice with such thoroughness and personalized care, without taking a financial hit to my business. It also causes distress to my patients, whose insurance companies fraudulently place naturopathic medicine into a category that requires meeting deductibles before any payment is made. It taxes my patients who want to see me as their primary care family physician, yet cannot get the same services covered through their insurance as they would if they visited an MD instead.

For these reasons, I am asking that you vote YES on the Naturopathic Physician Pay Parity bill. Thank you!

Sincerely,

Daivati Bharadvaj, ND

Daniel Milligan, ND  
February 13th, 2019

RE: Oregon Association of Naturopathic Physicians Pay Parity Bill

Dear Senate and Health Care Committees,

My name is Daniel Milligan and I am a Naturopathic Physician. I would like to share my experience working as an ND to show the importance of this profession in the delivery of quality healthcare in the state of Oregon, and the barriers that we face in trying to deliver this care.

- I decided to become an ND during my battle with Crohn's disease. I completed the four-year medical program and a one-year residency through the local accredited university here in Portland.
- I work closely with a number of other doctors who specialize in nephrology, endocrinology, and allopathic primary care.
- My practice is mostly focused on providing care to men—something that is not well represented in our current culture.
- As an ND in the great state of Oregon, I can practice to my full education which includes prescribing and managing medications. However, I spend a full hour with each new patient to understand their needs and concerns. Usually this is followed by comprehensive testing to find the cause of the patient's complaints. Once all their labs are reviewed a personal and plan is made for them which may or may not require pharmaceutical medications. The goal is always to treat the patient as an individual, do no harm, educate the patient about their health and treatment, and eventually have a positive outcome.
- As you can tell, we spend a great deal of time and effort with our patients to insure they have good outcomes and healthcare. Of course, we want equal pay for equal work, but more importantly we want reimbursement that is reflective of the quality of care our patients receive.
- Insuring that NDs receive equal pay also means that more young people will come to our profession, which can help heal the gap between too few primary care doctors to too many specialized doctors. This is a huge benefit to the community at large.
- Every patient has the right to choose their own doctor. As an ND I hope that the patients that choose to see me do so because they are getting the kind of care they cannot find elsewhere.

I am asking that you vote yes on the Naturopathic Physician Pay Parity bill.

Sincerely,  
Daniel Milligan, ND

Dr Eliot W. Edwards, ND, FABNO

*Naturopathic Cancer Specialist  
Wholistic and Integrative care.*



1836 NE 7<sup>th</sup> ave, Ste #205 | Portland Oregon 97212 | 503.206.6218 |  
sagecancercare.com

February 1, 2019

Re: Oregon Association of Naturopathic Physicians Pay Parity Bill (SB734)

Dear Senate and Health Care Committees,

My name is Dr. Eliot Edwards and I am a Naturopathic Physician and a Fellow of the American Board of Naturopathic Oncology (FABNO). My practice is focused on integrative oncology care, where I work collaboratively with my medical oncologist colleagues (MDs/DOs) to provide support for patients being treated with cancer.

My patients rely on my care to help make their cancer treatments tolerable – minimizing common side effects and maintaining their quality of life, during an otherwise challenging treatment.

The biggest challenge for many patient, however, is the limited coverage many insurance policies provide for naturopathic physicians. Some of these plans limit reimbursement, specifically for naturopathic physicians, despite NDs being fully licensed and recognized physicians in the state of Oregon. There is no reason for this other than discrimination. Patients who are fighting cancer should be able to access all providers without barriers due to reimbursement disparity from insurance providers. These patients are already saddled with significant costs for their treatments, and then are limited from access to integrative care because of this discrimination.

My wife, daughter and I moved back to Oregon in August 2017. My wife is also a naturopathic physician. We moved back here from Illinois largely because naturopathic physicians are fully licensed and highly integrated into the medical system in this state. Despite that recognition, discrimination in the form of poor reimbursement continues even here in Oregon through unfair practices by the insurance companies. Please help us change this.

I am asking that you vote yes on the Naturopathic Physician Pay Parity bill.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Eliot W. Edwards, ND, FABNO".

Eliot W. Edwards, ND, FABNO

Name: Elyse Ortiz, ND

Date: 2/13/19

Subject: Oregon Association of Naturopathic Physicians Pay Parity Bill

Dear Senate and Health Care Committees,

My name is Elyse Ortiz and I am a Naturopathic Physician. I would like to share my experience working with as an ND to show the importance of this profession in the delivery of quality healthcare in the state of Oregon, and the barriers that we face in trying to deliver this care.

Naturopathic physicians complete 4 years of medical school, diligently studying the same core science and clinical classes as our MD colleagues. In addition to these courses we study pharmacology, nutrition, botanical and physical medicine modalities which affords us a number of tools not readily available to conventional medical doctors. Our training is rigorous and requires not only diagnostic excellence but also excellence in providing safe, evidence-based patient care.

Preventative medicine, now more than ever, is vital to the health of every American. Among the leading causes of death are heart disease, diabetes, and stroke. Naturopathic physicians have the tools necessary to help patients not only manage these chronic diseases but also the training and insight to prevent these conditions. By empowering Naturopathic Physicians to provide quality care you can increase the health and wellbeing of countless Oregonians.

I am asking that you vote yes on the Naturopathic Physician Pay Parity bill.

Sincerely,

Elyse Ortiz, ND

Name: Fiona Campbell

Date: 2/13/19

Subject: Oregon Association of Naturopathic Physicians Pay Parity Bill

Dear Senate and Health Care Committees,

My name is Fiona Campbell and I am a Naturopathic Physician. I would like to share my experience working as a Naturopathic Physician to show the importance of this profession in the delivery of quality healthcare in the state of Oregon, and the barriers that we face in trying to deliver this care.

Naturopathic Physicians receive training as primary care providers at accredited 4-year post graduate medical schools. We are peers and partners in healthcare delivery, and many Oregonians have a Naturopathic Physician as their primary care provider. In my practice, I provide primary care for a diverse range of individuals. I spend between 30 and 75 minutes per appointment with my patients. Even though I typically spend more time with my patients than other types of providers, I am only reimbursed by insurance at an average of 60% the amount that other types of providers are reimbursed for the exact same office visit code.

Being reimbursed at a dismal rate limits both my earning potential and my ability to pay my student loans, which, given the high cost of medical school, are quite significant. Many patients seek out Naturopathic Physicians because they want a provider who will spend time understanding their full health picture. We pride ourselves in approaching patient care holistically, and spending more than 10 minutes with a patient allows us to do this. However, for many Naturopathic Physicians, the terrible rate of reimbursement necessitates spending less time with patients in order to make ends meet. Some Naturopathic Physicians will not accept certain insurances, while other Naturopathic Physicians operate on a cash-only basis to avoid this conundrum. This limits access to care, and all patients should have the choice and ability to select a Naturopathic Physician.

I am asking that you vote yes on the Naturopathic Physician Pay Parity bill.

Sincerely,

Fiona Campbell, ND



Name: Hana Marijke Paterno, ND

Date: 2/11/19

Subject: Oregon Association of Naturopathic Physicians Pay Parity Bill

Dear Senate and Health Care Committees,

My name is Hana Paterno and I am a naturopathic doctor. I would like to emphasize the importance of this profession in the delivery of quality healthcare in the state of Oregon. As a new doctor in a female dominant profession, I feel that I have to speak out on the rights of naturopathic doctors as well as females when it comes to pay parity. It is unacceptable that ND's are not paid equally for the same diagnostic codes as MDs and DOs. Naturopathic physicians clearly possess competence and professionalism in caring for patients and I believe that NDs should be respected as equal members at the healthcare table.

I am asking that you vote yes on the Naturopathic Physician Pay Parity bill.

Sincerely,

Hana Paterno, ND

Holly Zapf, ND

February 13, 2019

Re: Oregon Association of Naturopathic Physician Pay Parity Bill

Dear Senate and Healthcare Committee:

My name is Dr. Holly Zapf and I am a naturopathic physician who has been in private practice for 21 years in Portland, Oregon. I have a very successful family practice including many patients for whom I have been their family physician for 15-20 years.

Because my office visits are personalized and very in depth, I am often able to make diagnoses that are missed by my patient's time squeezed, harried medical doctors. At my office visit, I do a thorough family medical history and comprehensive lab profile. I combine this with detailed and individualized patient intakes. This approach allows me to help patients who feel like they have reached a dead-end with piecemeal, fast paced, pharmaceutical driven conventional medicine.

Because of my reputation for thoroughness and being able to help patients who have not improved with allopathic medical approaches, I receive many referrals from other medical professionals including medical doctors, nurse practitioners, and doctor's of osteopathic medicine. Increasingly, other medical practitioners are coming to recognize naturopathic physicians as the experts in holistic healthcare. Naturopathic doctors are unique in the thoroughness of our office visits and our dedication to individualized patient care. We have the extensive training and we spend the time with patients to get to the bottom of complex health problems and truly alleviate the suffering of our patients. Many patients report that their visit with me was the first time they felt deeply heard by a healthcare practitioner. Naturopathic physicians practice what is known as deep listening. In and of itself, this has tremendous therapeutic value.

My practice looks very much like the practice of a general practice family physician from 30 or more years ago. I treat the entire family from pregnancy to end of life, even doing home visits when necessary. I often know the patient's immediate family and extended family in addition to their network of friends and co-workers. Understanding patients in their real life social and cultural context is invaluable for understanding how to motivate my patients and help them to access a range of resources.

One of the biggest challenges I face as a practitioner is the unreliable rate of compensation for my care by insurance companies. Because I firmly believe in access to affordable holistic healthcare, I am on every health insurance panel (other than the Oregon Health Plan). While there are a few plans with very reasonable rates of compensation, many insurance plans compensate me at a rate that barely covers my office overhead. To avoid this cashflow dilemma, I have considered converting my office to a cash based practice. Repeatedly, I have rejected this

strategy as it would make my care unaffordable to many of the patients who rely on me.

Fortunately legislation has been drafted to address this vexing and long standing compensation problem. I strongly urge you to take a stand for patient choice and vote YES on the Naturopathic Physician Pay Parity bill!

Sincerely,

Holly Zapf, ND  
Owner  
Whole Family Health Clinic  
2928 SE Hawthorne Blvd Suite 106  
Portland, OR 97214

Name: Jacob Hoagland

Date: 2/13/2019

Subject: Oregon Association of Naturopathic Physicians Pay Parity Bill

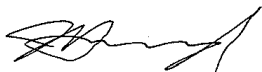
Dear Senate and Health Care Committees,

My name is Jacob Hoagland and I am a Naturopathic Physician. I would like to share my experience working with as an ND to show the importance of this profession in the delivery of quality healthcare in the state of Oregon, and the barriers that we face in trying to deliver this care.

- Education: I graduated a 4-year accredited medical school where we completed courses alongside clinical rotations with a focus on primary care. Our schooling was directed for evidence-based medicine in a primary care setting treating populations of all ages, races, gender identity and economic backgrounds.
- I am currently practicing in a residency program that is sponsored and accredited through the National University of Natural Medicine.
- The site that I practice out of is Grain Integrative Health, LLC. Located in SE Portland, our patient base is very diverse and primary care focused medicine. We are available 24/7 and function as a primary care home for the Medicaid community in the Greater Portland area.
- It is a constant struggle to practice in Oregon due to the severe pay discrepancy between provider types. Practicing in a fully licensed state and not being reimbursed for the services we deliver to patients makes it difficult to maintain a business and at the same time provide quality medical care.
- Due to the lack of reimbursement for services such as office visits we have to reduce office visit times, which takes care away from the patient in order to increase our patient contacts to improve revenue and keep our business affordable and accessible. Our overhead costs are similar to other private practices that do not have to also combat un-equal pay.
- Hardships I face trying to provide excellent care with disastrous rates of reimbursement include reduced office visit times, increased relative cost of services to keep the practice running such as staff, and billing salaries.

I am asking that you vote yes on the Naturopathic Physician Pay Parity bill. This will allow our profession to continue to service patients in holistic primary care.

Sincerely,



Jacob Hoagland, ND

Name: Janelle Siler, ND

Date: 2/13/19

Subject: Oregon Association of Naturopathic Physicians Pay Parity Bill

Dear Senate and Health Care Committees,

My name is Janelle Siler and I am a Naturopathic Physician I would like to share my experience working as an ND to show the importance of this profession in the delivery of quality healthcare in the state of Oregon, and the barriers that we face in trying to deliver this care.

A doctorate in Natural Medicine is a full 4 year medical program with potential for a residency, which is more education than either Nurse Practitioners or Physician Assistant's receive.

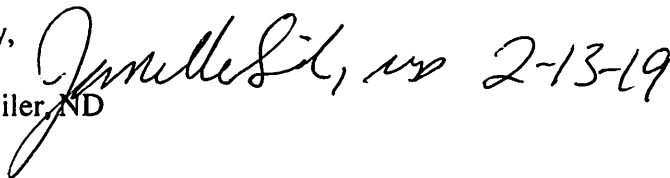
I work for ZoomCare, providing urgent and primary care to patients in the Portland metro area. I work in the same capacity as both Nurse Practitioners and Physician's Assistants and provide the same or better quality of care, but because insurance does not reimburse at the same rate I am paid almost \$40,000 a year less than my colleagues who do the exact same job. I also have other friends who are in private practice and struggling to make ends meet because insurance reimbursement is so low. Many of us can't afford to pay our student debt with our current income.

With today's lack of primary care providers NDs help to fill this critical role, but our ability to do so is severely limited by insurance reimbursement rates. We are asking for fair and equal reimbursement for fair and equal work.

I am asking that you vote yes on the Naturopathic Physician Pay Parity bill.

Sincerely,

Janelle Siler, ND

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Janelle Siler, ND" followed by the date "2-13-19". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Dr. Jennifer Karon

01/22/2019

Subject: Oregon Association of Naturopathic Physicians Pay Parity Bill

Dear Senate and Health Care Committees,

My name is Dr. Jennifer Karon, and I am a licensed Naturopathic Physician in the state of Oregon. I would like to share my experience working with as an ND to show the importance of this profession in the delivery of quality healthcare in the state of Oregon, and the barriers that we face in trying to deliver this care.

- My education included a 4 year undergraduate degree from Smith College, followed by a 5 year ND professional degree including internship at NUNM in Portland, OR. Additionally, I completed a one-year residency after graduation.
- NDs are seen as peers and partners in healthcare delivery. I regularly work with and receive referrals from MDs and NPs at Providence, OHSU, and Legacy health systems. Conventional medicine providers recognize that the ND profession excels in supporting patients to achieve their health goals, particularly in the areas of diet, lifestyle changes, and natural medicine use.
- I practice at a small health care center in SW Portland, OR, providing care for patients from birth to end of life, and all ages in-between. Patients and parents love that I can provide the primary care they need as well as more specialized care such as naturopathic manipulation, dietary and natural medicine consultation.
- In Oregon, I practice both primary care as well as specialized naturopathic care – meaning I can serve as a one-stop solution for patients who have both acute minor ailments such as viruses or ear infections, as well as chronic long-term degenerative conditions such as lupus, heart disease, diabetes, and many more.
- My reimbursement for services is considerably less than MDs, PAs or NPs who provide the same services. This causes me to use less staff hours to serve the needs of patients, such as not employing a medical assistant to obtain pre-authorizations for needed imaging and perform basic services such as taking vital signs and blood draws. In addition, I am not able to lease a space that is fully handicapped accessible, due to the higher rents such spaces require. I am simply not paid enough for my care to be able to afford a fully accessible space.
- Poor reimbursement rates also cause me to have to drop insurance contracts when reimbursement rates are slashed, thus disrupting care to patients. For example, last year Cigna announced in November 2018 that beginning January 2019, my reimbursement rates would be cut by 74%. I had no choice but to drop Cigna, as this would not even cover my operating expenses.

- Naturopathic medicine patient will tell you that they save insurers money by accessing the care of NDs – because they have multiple complaints covered by our care, which decreases need for multiple specialist and PCP visits.

I am asking that you vote yes on the Naturopathic Physician Pay Parity bill.

Sincerely,

*J. Karon, ND.*

Dr. Jennifer Karon

Name: Khivan Oberoi

Date: Feb 11, 2019

Subject: Oregon Association of Naturopathic Physicians Pay Parity Bill

Dear Senate and Health Care Committees,

My name is Khivan Oberoi and I am a Naturopathic Physician and I would like to share my experience working with as an ND to show the importance of this profession in the delivery of quality healthcare in the state of Oregon, and the barriers that we face in trying to deliver this care.

I've known I wanted to be a Naturopathic Physician since I was a child. My great uncle was an ND and I loved watching him work with families. I went to Beaverton High School and participated in the Health Careers Program (where I'm now an annual returning speaker) so I could explore other medical career options and consolidated my choice. I went to the University of Portland and wrote my honors thesis on the history of Naturopathic Medicine in America.

I have been serving patients in Portland and in Salem for nearly a decade. During my time at the National University of Natural Medicine, as a student and then as a resident physician, I saw how opening up access to alternative medicine can provide opportunities for health improvement. I worked with patients who outright refused prescription medication options in favor of natural alternatives and by developing a trusting relationship with them, I was able offer a full scope of treatment options (because, realistically sometimes antibiotics and diabetes medication is just the better answer).

My hope is that pay parity for Naturopathic Physicians leads to better access for our patients. For insurance companies to understand that adding obstacles like higher deductibles and copays for Naturopathic care means that some patients opt out of care altogether, choosing Dr. Google or Facebook to pick out supplements or essential oils.

When it comes to my business, insurance companies pay me anywhere from \$24 per visit to \$120.12. That indicates to me that the value of my medicine is highly variable and likely has little to do with actual outcomes. Every patient I can sit down and educate about nutrition, exercise and stress management is an opportunity to avoid chronic disease and therefore lifelong prescription medication or expensive surgeries. Every patient I can counsel about self-care, connection and community is one less person requiring lifelong anti-depressant or anti-anxiety medication.

Ultimately, I see this bill as an opportunity to validate choice. I tell all of my patients that I am a coach, I am cheerleader, and I am a teacher. But they are in the driver's seat in regards to their health and their bodies. When patients can choose to pursue natural medicine in lieu of a 10 min visit with their PCP and a prescription on their way out the door, they are making a choice to use nutrition, exercise, sleep and



stress management to prevent and treat the chronic diseases that are bankrupting out current healthcare model.

I am asking that you vote yes on the Naturopathic Physician Pay Parity bill.

Thank you for reading this. Thank you for your service. Thank you for taking time to consider the choices that your constituents have access to.

Sincerely,

Khivan Oberoi, ND

Name: Laura Lewman

Date: 2/11/19

Subject: Oregon Association of Naturopathic Physicians Pay Parity Bill

Dear Senate and Health Care Committees,

My name is Laura Lewman and I am a Naturopathic Doctor (ND). I would like to share my experience working as an ND to show the importance of this profession in the delivery of quality healthcare in the state of Oregon, and the barriers that we face in trying to deliver this care.

I have been working at ZOOM+Care providing urgent and primary care to an average of 20-25 patients per day for the past 3 years. I treat conditions ranging from common cold to pneumonia to hypertension to cellulitis and diabetes. My 4-year medical training as a naturopathic physician prepared me for seeing this vast array of conditions and to address them from both a conventional perspective with medications, and also with natural treatments such as diet/lifestyle and herbal medicine.

About a year and a half ago my company cut ND pay across the board by about 25% because insurance companies are not reimbursing for ND services rendered at the same rate as they do for non-ND providers such as physician assistants and nurse practitioners. Some insurance companies flat-out deny services rendered by ND's. This has deeply affected my personal life and also how I feel about the medicine I practice. I've had to re-adjust my lifestyle to account of the pay cut. I also feel the care I deliver is devalued, when it is at least at the same level or better than my non-ND counterparts. I have to live every day knowing that these other providers, who do the exact same job that I do, get reimbursed more than I do. This is demeaning more than I can state here.

I strongly believe that the ability ND's have to treat medical conditions without drugs is the way of the future of medicine. Increasingly, patients choose to see an ND who can offer alternatives to conventional medical treatment. Now these patients are being met with higher-than-usual co-payment/insurance or may have zero coverage for their ND visits. Patients should have the right to choose which type of medical provider they see without having to worry about affording this type of care.

For all of these reasons, I am asking that you vote yes on the Naturopathic Physician Pay Parity bill.

Sincerely,

Laura Lewman, ND

Name: Lila Derickson, ND

Date: January 31, 2019

Subject: Oregon Association of Naturopathic Physicians Pay Parity Bill

Dear Senate and Health Care Committees,

I am a naturopathic physician. I would like to share my perspective as an ND to show the importance of this profession in the delivery of quality healthcare in the state of Oregon, and the barriers that we face in trying to deliver this care.

In order to provide safe, quality medical care, naturopathic doctors attend rigorous accredited medical schools, just as conventional doctors do. Unlike conventional doctors, we learn two systems of medicine (naturopathic and conventional), which provides invaluable insight into patient care. We acquire large amounts of student loan debt comparable to that of conventional doctors. We work with the same insurance systems. We provide excellent care, and our dedication to a patient's case often exceeds what they receive in more traditional settings. And yet, despite offering equivalent services and dealing with equivalent debt, we are compensated less.

Oregon has a constant need for primary care providers. Naturopathic physicians can fill that need. Yet many choose to start other businesses or move to different states because of our abysmal reimbursement rates. We truly care about our patients, but we need to be able to pay our loans, our staff, care for our families, afford health care for ourselves, etc.

Fair reimbursement would allow us to attain financial security in return for all of our hard work. But it is not just about the money--it would also be a sign of respect and appreciation for the valuable services that we have to offer.

I am asking that you vote yes on the Naturopathic Physician Pay Parity bill.

Sincerely,

Dr. Lila Derickson  
Naturopathic Physician

Name: Lindsay Rodgers

Date: 2/13/19

Subject: Oregon Association of Naturopathic Physicians Pay Parity Bill

Dear Senate and Health Care Committees,

My name is Lindsay Rodgers and I am a Naturopathic Physician. I have completed 2 years of residency and I provide mental health care to patients across the Portland area. There is a desperate need for more mental health services in our community. In addition to nutrition, supplements, and lifestyle counseling I regularly prescribe anti-depressants, mood stabilizers, and antipsychotics. I practice similarly to a psychiatrist or psychiatric nurse practitioner, yet I get reimbursed much less for the same service.

As naturopathic doctors we are disproportionately reimbursed for our services, even when compared to mid level providers such as nurse practitioners and physicians assistants. This impedes our ability to hire staff, pay back our student loans, and for many we struggle to make a living wage.

I am asking that you vote yes on the Naturopathic Physician Pay Parity bill.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Lindsay Rodgers". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned below the word "Sincerely,".

Lindsay Rodgers, ND, MS

Name: Lindsay Wilkinson

Date: 2/11/19

Subject: Oregon Association of Naturopathic Physicians Pay Parity Bill

Dear Senate and Health Care Committees,

My name is Dr. Lindsay Wilkinson and I am a Naturopathic Physician. I would like to share my experience working with as an ND to show the importance of this profession in the delivery of quality healthcare in the state of Oregon, and the barriers that we face in trying to deliver this care.

- I obtained a 4 year post undergraduate degree and am fully qualified to see patients as a primary care provider or naturopathic specialist.
- Naturopathic Physicians are seen by patients and other providers as professionals with the same level of qualification as medical doctors and should be paid equally.
- I have a fully booked women's health practice in Portland, Oregon and my patients both need and want to continue coming to me as their trusted provider.
- As a Naturopathic Physician in Oregon, I can maintain a full primary care scope of practice including DEA license to prescribe all medications that are necessary for my patients.
- The inequality of reimbursement by insurance providers has made practicing to my full capacity difficult and has made it more difficult for patient's to access the care that they need.
- As payments continue to decrease, in order to keep my practice open, I have had to make the choice to reduce the number of minutes per patient visit, which leads to reduced quality of care as patients count on naturopathic diet and lifestyle counseling to create a lasting beneficial impact on their health.
- Without equal pay, I have had to consider leaving practice entirely, which would be disastrous for my patients, many of whom have had a difficult time finding providers in Portland at all.
- It's incredibly important for patients to have a choice when it comes to their healthcare, and Naturopathic Physicians are leaders in the arena of complementary and alternative medicine. Many patients that I see on a daily basis refuse to initiate the conventional treatment strategies or have been unable to tolerate conventional treatment options. It is imperative that these patients have the opportunity to access the alternative medicines that Naturopaths provide to their patients.

I am asking that you vote yes on the Naturopathic Physician Pay Parity bill.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Lindsay Wilkinson".

Lindsay Wilkinson ND, LAc



Date: February 10, 2019

Subject: Oregon Association of Naturopathic Physicians Pay Parity Bill

Dear Senate and Health Care Committees,

My name is Maeghan Culver and I am a Naturopathic Physician (ND) and owner of a medical clinic in Tualatin, Oregon. I would like to share my experience working as an ND to show the importance of this profession in the delivery of quality healthcare in the state of Oregon, and the barriers that we face in trying to deliver this care.

In 2015 my sister-in-law and I launched a family medicine clinic in Tualatin, OR. Our primary mission is delivering excellent, patient-centered primary care for patients of all ages. As we have grown, we have served thousands of patients from our local communities, offering appointments where physicians spend between 30-60 minutes face to face with patients. These longer appointment times allow patients with complex needs to not only feel heard and develop a trusting relationship with their provider, but to get information on how to address their health issues through development of healthy lifestyle rather than just a prescription for a new drug therapy. We prescribe medications, natural and pharmaceutical, as needed, but we always discuss these recommendations and the rationale behind them, ensuring better compliance with the plan of care and improved outcomes. Our patients have given great feedback on how important this relationship and the time they get with their doctors are, especially as many clinics offer less than 10 minutes of face to face time with their physician or even limit contact to non-physician providers such as nurse practitioners or physicians assistants.

We would love to continue to expand, creating more jobs and delivering excellent primary care services to our community, but as we review our compensation from private insurance companies we have found that our growth will be stunted by their low pay rates. ***Private insurance companies are currently paying NDs as little as 60% of what they pay other provider types.*** In most cases, Medicaid provides better compensation simply because they offer equal pay Naturopathic Physicians. If our compensation is not raised to match our counterparts, we will have to reduce the face to face time spent with our patients, which significantly impacts the quality of care a patient receives. Please support excellent primary care with naturopathic physicians by helping us gain equal compensation for our services.

I am asking that you vote yes on the Naturopathic Physician Pay Parity bill.

Sincerely,

Maeghan Culver, ND

Max Cohen  
3111 SE 64th Ave  
Portland, OR 97206  
12 Feb 2019

Oregon Senate Health Care Committee  
900 Court St. NE  
Salem, Oregon 97301

Subject: SB 734 - Oregon Association of Naturopathic Physicians Pay Parity Bill

Dear Senate and Health Care Committees,

My name is Max Cohen and I am a Naturopathic Physician working in community health in the Portland metro area. I am writing to share with you the importance of my profession's contributions to the delivery of quality healthcare within our state, and the unconscionable discrimination we face regarding insurance reimbursement.

I attended a 4-year medical training program at the National University of Natural Medicine, and completed my residency in integrative primary care here in Oregon. Since completing my training, I have worked for ZOOM+Care, providing urgent and primary care services to a varied patient population. I see 15 - 20 patients per day, and am responsible for attending to both acute illness as well as complex chronic conditions. I perform precisely the same work as my medical doctor (MD), osteopathic doctor (DO), physician assistant (PA-C), and family nurse practitioner (FNP) colleagues, but receive on average 40% less reimbursement for these services from insurance companies.

My goal when entering the medical field was to provide the highest quality of primary care to my patients, but the highly unfavorable insurance reimbursement rates are disastrous for our profession. Naturopathic physicians receive more training than PA-C and FNP practitioners, and comparable training to that of MD/DO colleagues. We carry the same student debt burden and equal costs of practice (licensure, continuing education, consumable supplies, etc.). Yet we are asked to perform these duties for 40% less than our peers. This is untenable and severely limits practice opportunities.

Oregon is in desperate need for primary care providers (PCPs), especially in rural and underserved urban areas. Naturopathic physicians can and should be a resource to address this shortfall of PCPs, but many of us simply cannot practice at the discriminatory reimbursement rates being offered. As such, I implore you to vote yes on the SB 734 , the Naturopathic Physician Pay Parity bill. Thank you for your time and consideration in this important matter.

Sincerely,



Max Cohen, N.D.  
Portland, Oregon

Tammy Ashney, ND

February 13, 2019

Subject: Oregon Association of Naturopathic Physicians Pay Parity Bill

Dear Senate and Health Care Committees,

My name is Tammy Ashney and I am a Naturopathic Physician. I am currently an Assistant Professor and Attending Physician at the National University of Natural Medicine (NUNM). I would like to share my educational background and experience working as an ND to show the importance of this profession in the delivery of quality healthcare in the state of Oregon, and the barriers that we face in trying to deliver this care.

In regard to my educational background, I attended NUNM from 2004-2009 and then subsequently did three years of residency. During my education, I received training in all of the basic and clinical sciences with **additional extensive** training in herbal medicine, nutrition, hydrotherapy, and manual therapies to name a few. In addition to rotations with naturopathic physicians, I also completed rotations with obstetrician-gynecologists, urologists, cardiologists, neurologists, gastroenterologists, oncologists, and family practice medical doctors.

As an Attending Physician at NUNM Lair Hill Health Center and Beaverton Clinics, I am serving a wide variety of patients, many of which have significant health concerns. In the past year alone, I have diagnosed hepatitis C, HIV, cervical cancer, endometrial cancer, breast cancer, liver cirrhosis, congestive heart failure, chronic kidney disease, osteoporosis, and so much more. Some patients end up seeing me because my clinic is a Patient Centered Primary Care Home (PCPCH) and the clinic is "in-network." However, many patients utilize my clinic services because the clinic is both "in-network" **and** matches a personal philosophy or ideology.

As a clinician, I am not just providing adjunctive care. For many patients, I am their primary care physician who is helping coordinate their referrals to oncology or hepatology, ordering their labs to monitor their glucose and lipid levels, and checking in on their health maintenance needs to make sure they are getting their Pap tests and mammograms. I am also inserting their IUDs, draining their abscesses, prescribing their antidepressants, doing their endometrial biopsies, and vaccinating their children. In Washington County, I have partnered with the Health Department on multiple occasions to assist in coordinating care for patients in need including cases of tuberculosis and HIV.

As naturopathic physicians, many of us are on the front lines of medicine. We often see people who are "scared of doctors" or who only want to do "natural" treatments. Many times I am talking my patients out of doing their juice fast or their supplement because it is unsafe for their condition. Many times I am discussing the importance of proper testing or procedures for precise diagnostic decision-making. I have had



numerous patients come into office after not having been to a physician in many years because of fear.

I love being a naturopathic physician because my educational foundation in all the medical sciences in conjunction with my natural medicine knowledge places me in a prime position to reach those patients who are fearful of the conventional medical model. However, I fear that should we naturopathic physicians not get the full reimbursement that we deserve for the care given, many of us may stop accepting insurance altogether leaving many vulnerable patients without their chosen caregiver and further access for proper diagnosis and work-up. Additionally, by not offering pay parity, even those patients who are not fearful of physicians but who simply want more options in regards to their health, may be unable to access naturopathic services if we become a cash only model.

I did not go into medicine to only serve the most advantaged wealthy minority. I have a strong desire to continue to serve a variety of patients from all backgrounds and help inform their decision-making regarding all of their health options whether it is a surgery they might need, the quality of the fish oil they should take, or how adding spearmint tea to their diet might support their polycystic ovaries.

I am asking that you please vote yes on the Naturopathic Physician Pay Parity bill.

Sincerely,

Tammy Ashney, ND

Name: Tyler Keliiheleua

Date: 2/1/19

Subject: Oregon Association of Naturopathic Physicians Pay Parity Bill

Dear Senate and Health Care Committees,

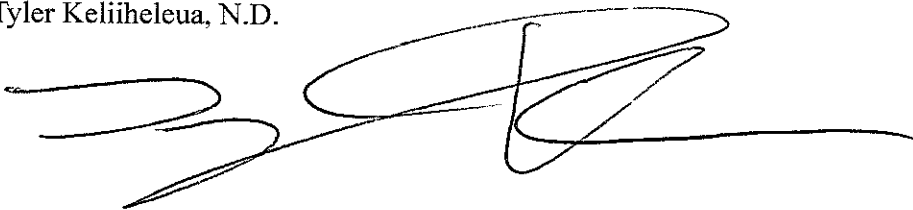
My name is Tyler Keliiheleua and I am a Naturopathic Physician. I would like to share my experience working as an ND to show the importance of this profession in the delivery of quality healthcare in the state of Oregon, and the barriers that we face in trying to deliver this care.

- I obtained my doctoral degree at National University of Natural Medicine in Portland, Oregon. This 4-year medical program is equal to MD, DO, and FNP programs in both academic scope and cost and exceeds both metrics in comparison to the typical 2-year programs Physician Assistants complete.
- NDs are peers and partners in healthcare delivery. I collaborate with all provider types and specialists to deliver high quality care to my patients.
- I see 10-15 patients a day 5 days a week as a functional medicine practitioner addressing complex autoimmune conditions, chronic infections, cardiovascular and metabolic disease and cancer.
- I love what I do and how I am able to help my patients, but there are financially imposed limitations to my work and practice that simply do not make sense or serve my patients.
- Disproportionately low reimbursement rates have forced me to decide whether or not I will participate in insurance networks and ultimately limit access to quality care for my patients.
- I have been in continuous practice for over 10 years since graduating in spite of unfair and frankly disastrous reimbursement rates from insurance. Most providers could not and would not do the same.
- I employ 8 individuals locally including administrative staff, billing support, clinical support, management, and physicians in order to deliver exceptional care to my patients, however, this comes at a great cost to me personally.
- I have faced significant financial hardship due to delivering exceptional care and receiving a fraction of the pay for it. This limits my ability to pay back my student loans acquired during medical school as well as care for my family, grow my business, and provide for my employees.
- It is imperative that all patients have a choice in the kind of healthcare they receive. Lack of parity in reimbursement has forced me as a business owner to modify my practice and alter the care I deliver and to whom I deliver it to.

For the above reasons I am asking that you vote yes on the Naturopathic Physician Pay Parity bill.

Sincerely,

Tyler Keliiheleua, N.D.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Tyler Keliiheleua', written over a horizontal line.

Name: Chad Wageman

Date: 2/1/19

Subject: Oregon Association of Naturopathic Physicians Pay Parity Bill

Dear Senate and Health Care Committees,

My name is Chad Wageman, NCPT and I am an Infusion Specialist at a Naturopathic clinic. I would like to share my experience working with an ND to show the importance of this profession in the delivery of quality healthcare in the state of Oregon.

I have worked in healthcare for almost a decade now and am amazed at the integration of medicine Naturopaths incorporate into their practices. They approach medicine from a holistic standpoint and are able to treat the patient on a more intimate level. They utilize all medicine, not just western medicine.

Naturopathic Physicians support the types of patients that other physicians may turn away because of the lack of knowledge in certain aspects of medicine.

Paying Naturopathic Physicians equally to MD's, DO's, and other medical professions is not only right, it is our moral obligation.

I am asking that you vote yes on the Naturopathic Physician Pay Parity bill.

Sincerely,

Chad Wageman, NCPT  
Natural Family Health Clinic

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'CW', is written over the typed name and title.

Name: Vera Alcorn

Date: February 12, 2019

Subject: Oregon Association of Naturopathic Physicians Pay Parity Bill

Dear Senate and Health Care Committees,

My name is Vera Alcorn and I am a recently graduated Naturopathic student on my way to becoming licensed as a Naturopathic physician. I work in an administrative capacity at a Naturopathic clinic in Portland and see first hand the value of natural medicine and the difficulty the current lack of pay parity causes.

My Naturopathic education was a five-year program with extensive training in nutrition, herbal medications, other natural treatments, pharmacology, and the interactions between these modalities. Naturopathic physicians are the best trained doctors to help patients navigate the confusing, complex world of diets, supplements, and alternative medical treatments. We are trained to read the research to critically evaluate treatments and to educate our patients about how to make choices for themselves. Naturopathic physicians are trained to provide primary care or to work as an adjunct to complement conventional medicine.

Working as an administrator at a Naturopathic clinic I see the invoices and explanation of benefits that return from insurance companies. It is dismaying to see how little our physicians are reimbursed for their time. They spend time getting to know each patient, learning what their needs are, and truly educating them about their diagnoses and treatments. I often hear patients saying they are grateful to have had the time and attention that our physicians are able to share. If reimbursement rates continue to remain as low as they are, it will no longer be possible for our physicians to give this much time and care to their patients. They will need to pursue a higher volume of patients with shorter appointment times in order to support themselves and this would decrease the quality of care they are able to provide.

I am concerned for my future practice. I would like to be able to practice with the Naturopathic principles of *docere*, the doctor as teacher, and *sero medicina curator*, prevention, while also being able to live a comfortable life and pay my student loans back. I did not pursue this training so I could see 20 patients in one day, each of them for only a few minutes. I wanted to become a Naturopathic physician so I could empower patients to really understand what they eat and what medications and supplements they are taking. I know colleagues and classmates who have decided to pursue becoming nurses or physician assistants because they cannot support themselves as Naturopathic physicians with the current reimbursement rates. We should be able to use our Naturopathic degrees to support ourselves.

I am asking that you vote yes on the Naturopathic Physician Pay Parity bill.

Sincerely,

Vera Alcorn, ND



**Dr. Whitney Hayes**  
**Kwan Yin Healing Arts Center**  
2330 NW Flanders, Suite 101  
Portland, Oregon, 97210  
ph (503) 701-8766



Name: Whitney Hayes

Date: 2/12/19

Subject: Oregon Association of Naturopathic Physicians Pay Parity Bill

Dear Senate and Health Care Committees,

My name is Whitney Hayes and I am a Naturopathic Physician. I would like to share my experience working as an ND to show the importance of this profession in the delivery of quality healthcare in the state of Oregon, and the barriers that we face in trying to deliver this care.

I graduated from NUNM in 2009 and have been in private practice since then in Portland. I have a dual degree with a doctorate in naturopathic medicine and a master's in Chinese medicine, which took 6 years to complete. Our training is just as rigorous as a conventional medical school and just as costly. My student loan debt is very hefty.

Since being in private practice for almost 10 years, I have seen a lot of changes in health care. One of the biggest changes is the increasing inequality between pay for MD's and ND's. I have a specialized practice in naturopathic gastroenterology and see many difficult cases. I've seen the reimbursements for some of my MD colleagues who bill the exact same CPT code as I do and the pay is vastly different. I'm paid sometimes a quarter of what an MD is paid. That is incredibly unfair because I am just as qualified as those colleagues and should be paid as an equal. This inequality in pay and overall decreasing in reimbursement rates over time is going to put many good doctors out of business. I don't think there are any doctors that went in to medicine to be business people, but it is a reality. The strain that the lower rates puts on a practice like mine are very significant. It causes financial stress that will over time be part of what leads to burn out.

I believe it is important for patients to have a choice in the providers they seek and to have an alternative to conventional medicine. Patients are asking for this very thing.

I am asking that you vote yes on the Naturopathic Physician Pay Parity bill.

Sincerely,

Whitney Hayes  
Naturopathic Physician  
Licensed Acupuncturist

Name: Angela Cortal

Date: 2/6/19

Subject: Oregon Association of Naturopathic Physicians Pay Parity Bill

Dear Senate and Health Care Committees,

My name is Angela Cortal and I am a Naturopathic Physician I would like to share my experience working with as an ND to show the importance of this profession in the delivery of quality healthcare in the state of Oregon, and the barriers that we face in trying to deliver this care.

I provide Primary Care services to all ages. But as the years progress, the costs of keeping our private clinic open in light of the shrinking insurance reimbursements make that balance more and more difficult. Instead of trying to see more and more patients, giving them shorter and shorter visits, I believe Pay Parity will go a long way towards restoring the balance we seek. No one wants 5 minute visits. Not the patients, not the doctors. Being paid at 60% of others put us at an extreme economic disadvantage. There is no good reason for this. I am working to change this. I hope you support us in this endeavor.

I am asking that you vote yes on the Naturopathic Physician Pay Parity bill.

Sincerely,

Angela Cortal