

March 23, 2021

Re: SB772, Support Fair Pay for Naturopathic Doctors (NDs)

Dear Senate and Health Care Committee Members,

My name is Suzanne Scopes and I have been a Naturopathic Doctor (ND) in Oregon since 1986. I would like to share my experience working in Oregon as a licensed ND delivering quality healthcare in my community, the barriers I face in delivering this care and ask you to please support SB772.

I see my role as more than just a primary care physician. I partner with my patients to both treat and prevent illness. This is why I have sacrificed so much to become a physician and practice medicine in my local community. I take seriously the "doctor as teacher" tenet of naturopathic medicine. By doing this, we lower health care costs to the system through prevention and empowerment of patients to make healthy changes.

I often manage the majority of the healthcare needs for my patients, whether it be their annual physical, lab orders, health screenings or prescription(s). I also make referrals to other competent providers and specialists when appropriate. In addition, I teach my patients about diet and nutrition, how to stay active, manage stress, improve their sleep and become more proactive in their own healthcare. All of these things come together to create a more complete treatment plan for their health.

Unfortunately, NDs are not being fairly compensated for our valuable contributions to healthcare in this great state. This makes it more difficult for ND's to stay in practice and deliver this essential and unique level of care. It also limits access to healthcare for my patients as well as other individuals and families in the community. And for those of us who have been able to stay in practice, we do so at a great economic disadvantage to our peers, making it difficult to repay student loans, raise a family and give back to the community. In fact, the cost of a naturopathic medical degree is similar to an MD or DO degree, but compensation once in practice falls far short of our peers.

I am asking you to vote yes on SB772 and support fair pay for Naturopathic Doctors.

Sincerely yours,
Suzanne Scopes, ND