

FROM THE DESK OF

## Tyler Keliheleua, ND

March 24, 2021

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

Dear Senate Health Care Committee,

My name is Tyler Keliheleua and I am a Naturopathic Doctor (ND). I would like to share my experience working in Oregon as a licensed ND for the past 12 years and ask you to please support SB772.

I love helping people. This is why I have sacrificed so much to become a physician and continue to sacrifice to maintain a private practice in my local community. I love connecting with people whatever situation they are coming from, and helping them both understand their medical condition and successfully implement a plan to move their health forward.

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 like me are not being fairly compensated for our valuable contributions to healthcare in this great state. On average we get reimbursed 50 cents on the dollar for doing the exact same work as other licensed providers including NPs and PAs. This makes it more difficult for people like me to stay in practice and deliver this essential and unique level of care. It also limits access to and choice of healthcare for my patients and the community.

In 2019 I had to make the difficult decision to no longer participate in more than one major insurance network because they were only paying 40% of the market rate for my services. As a small business this was simply unsustainable. Sadly, this move impacted over 400 of my patients, forcing them to find care elsewhere or go without. This is unacceptable.

For those of us (NDs) 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.

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

Sincerely yours,

Tyler Keliheleua, ND