

FROM THE URGENT CARE

## (Dr. Alex Halaby, ND)

3/24/21

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

Dear Senate Health Care Committee,

My name is **Alex Halaby** and I am a Naturopathic Doctor (ND) working in an urgent care and primary care setting. I would like to share my experience working in Oregon as a licensed ND and ask you to please support SB772.

I work in an urgent care that also provides primary care services in a low-income part of the state. In fact, most if not all of my established patients are on state insurance and have extremely complex cases including but certainly not limited to crystal meth addiction, uncontrolled diabetes, and psychiatric disorders. I see twenty plus patients a day while overseeing and training my physician assistant colleagues. I am often running stat labs and triaging to the emergency department. I have sacrificed so much to become a physician and practice medicine 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 manage all healthcare needs for my patients as an MD would, whether it be their annual physical, lab orders, health screenings and prescription(s) and even correcting a hypertensive crisis in my office. 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. Let's just say, I do it all!

Unfortunately, NDs are not being fairly compensated for our valuable contributions to healthcare in most states. This makes it more difficult for people like me to stay in practice and get hired at really any establishment. Our reimbursement for quality care is so low that we are "un-hirable" at this point. 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.

Four years of pre-med in undergrad, four years of medical school, residency and now three years of clinical practice in an urgent care setting and my company is reimbursed pennies for the same office visit codes as my nurse practitioner colleague with one year of experience. Many of us are regretting our decision to ever join the naturopathic community and I foresee us losing many brilliant minds to alternate careers due to this.

I work as an MD in my urgent care with no clinician oversight. I have earned through academia and experience to be reimbursed at a minimum as well as a PA or an NP.

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

Sincerely yours,

**Dr. Alexandra Halaby**