

Senate Health Care Committee,

I am asking you to vote YES on SB772 and support fair pay for Naturopathic Doctors. Unfortunately, NDs are not being fairly compensated for their valuable contributions to healthcare in Oregon.

Naturopathic Doctors are vital to the over all health of Oregonians. The extended depth and breadth of knowledge they bring to health care is instrumental in helping Oregonians deal with a wide variety of health issues. Naturopathic doctors receive their degree after at least 4 years of medical school. Many also participate in multi-year residencies following graduation. They are taught in their training both the conventional allopathic pharmaceutical treatments but are also exposed to naturopathic and homeopathic treatments that bring a greater understanding to disease causes and treatments.

Most Naturopathic doctors use a combination of allopathic, naturopathic and homeopathic medicine. Their breadth of knowledge provides greater insight into diagnosis and options for treatment. This is especially true for patients with chronic health conditions. Often physicians identify symptoms of a patient with chronic illness, provide a label for the disease (i.e., Lupus, Chronic Fatigue Syndrome, Fibromyalgia, etc.) and write a prescription to try to cover up the symptoms. My experience is that Naturopathic doctors will spend time with the patient to try to identify the cause of the health condition and provide options for treatment accordingly.

The experiences of our extended family recognize that allopathic medicine is best for acute health conditions. Broken bones, strokes, cancer, heart disease, etc. are conditions that need to be treated with the extended knowledge of MD professionals. What we are asking for is improvement in the breadth of knowledge and treatment options for the wide range of health issues that confront Oregonians.

Without fair and equivalent compensation for Naturopaths, it is more difficult for NDs to stay in practice and deliver this essential and unique level of care. It also places them at a great economic disadvantage to their healthcare peers, making it difficult to repay student loans, raise their families, and give back to the community. Alongside this, it limits access to healthcare and choice of healthcare for many individuals and families in the community. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely yours,

Craig Christensen
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