

04.04.2021

Subject: Testimony for SB772

Dear Senate Health Care Committee Members,

I am Dr. Terrance Manning II and I practice in an outpatient integrative care clinic in Beaverton, OR called RestorePDX. I work along side three medical doctors on collaborative basis daily. My family and I currently reside in Durham, OR. I'm writing to provide testimony in support of SB772. This important bill before your committee seeks to rectify discriminatory practices via insurance companies that have major ramifications for the financial stability of the many naturopathic small businesses.

SB772 aims to provide pay parity for the services rendered by naturopathic physicians. Currently, naturopathic physicians are reimbursed by insurers less than their colleagues for providing similar if not superior care. Naturopathic physicians are reimbursed significantly less than MDs, DOs, and even NPs and PAs, even though under Oregon law we are physician level practitioners. Not only does the law define us as physicians, but also our postgraduate education and residencies are evidence of our physician level care. For instance, I completed a 3-year residency, two of which were supervised by an MD. I have devoted 11 years of education directly to provide services to patients, yet I am reimbursed less than NPs and PAs who have far less training and time invested in education to receive their privileges.

Not only is the current reimbursement structure by insurers unjustly discriminatory and does not take into account our professional's level of training, but also these reimbursement policies have significant untoward financial impact. In a state lacking in primary care physicians, which is what we are trained to do, it is very difficult to keep a naturopathic practice financially solvent when we are being reimbursed so low compared to our healthcare colleagues. Naturopathic practices services are largely evaluation and management (E&M) at a primary care level. Our profession does not have the same procedure/surgery based model as our conventional healthcare colleagues. This means that our conventional colleagues know they make more by performing interventions, thus have little incentive nor desire to provide E&M services. Yet naturopaths specifically rely on E&M reimbursement to remain solvent and are particularly well prepared to fill the niche in lack of primary care E&M of acute and chronic conditions effecting Oregonians.

Even greater, for those of us who seek employment at hospital or group practices, it does not make financial sense for these practices to hire naturopaths, as they can just hire PAs and NPs and make a higher margin off of their services. This makes it very difficult for our professionals to find clinical based services that will also cover their cost of living, pay off student loans, and contribute to the local economy.

I hope that you will take this into consideration with your deliberation regarding this important bill. I hope that you will support moving this bill out of committee in a timely manner and support its passage into law.

With Gratitude,

Terrance Manning II, ND, RMSK, MA

Attending Physician Restore PDX