

House Bill 2493 may be problematic and important to oppose. It attempts to provide a registration mechanism and rule making authority for alternative practitioners that if passed could negatively impact thousands of diverse healers and Complementary and Alternative health care practitioners in Oregon.

Please protect the right of people to access health care practitioners, products, and broad range of healing arts that resonate with their own health and wellness decisions. It is recommended there be a safe harbor practitioner exemption law, similar to other states, for unlicensed healers and practitioners who are providing non-invasive methods of healing and health care services in Oregon. Complementary and Alternative practitioners need to be involved in any discussion or working group that takes place regarding this bill.

It is my understanding that HB 2493 attempts to set up an entirely new and unnecessary regulatory process. The bill would eliminate the presumption of safety that is held by vocations that are generally regarded as safe.

1. There is no constitutional basis to establish and promote regulation, including state registration with government endorsed education. Registration is a form of government involvement that should not be initiated unless there is a clear showing of harm to the public without registration. There are less costly and restrictive models of informing the public.
2. HB 2493 inappropriately captures the term "alternative well-being care" as a catch-all term and attempts to set up a state registration system with rule making for the broad field of diverse, generally regarded as safe, healing disciplines; many of which have their own body of knowledge, educational requirements or programs, codes of ethics, as well as, oftentimes, professional organizations to administer them.
3. This bill has the potential of sending a strong signal of fear to local complementary and alternative practitioners, presenting a complex legal environment which would force them out of business. This would increase unemployment and leave citizens with fewer choices of vital diverse modalities and practitioners such as Homeopaths, Herbalists, and Naturopaths.
4. HB 2493 is set forth as being a voluntary registration but it can be looked upon as an aggressive first step by a government to insert its opinion that a practice should be regulated, especially when the government is given rule making authority in the bill. There is great concern that a voluntary regulation could lead to a mandatory regulation in the future because the presumption of the status of "generally regarded as safe" is not being protected by the government and rule making authority is being given.
5. Rule making is of great concern. The bill does not include clear meaning in the statute language but rather refers to future rules to be made. The bill would delegate broad future rule making capabilities and authority to a government agency, the Health Licensing Office. This rule making is expansive, expensive, and includes many aspects of these diverse vocations that could lead to government attempting to shape each one of these vocations without their permission and without cause or expertise, including standards of practice, scope of practice, and standards of professional conduct for practitioners.
6. It is my understanding many states use the preferable "safe harbor practitioner exemption" for regulating all complementary and alternative health care practitioners that are not conventionally licensed by the state. It provides an exemption from registration or licensing requirements as long as the practitioners avoid prohibited acts and provide disclosures to clients. Eleven states now have this model of legislation with many other states introducing or preparing to introduce.
7. Complementary and Alternative practitioners offer natural and effective treatments not available in conventional medicine.