

Dear Joint Committee On Ways and Means Subcommittee On Education;

My name is Kristen Plunkett, ND. I live in Josephine County, and I practice naturopathic medicine in Grants Pass, OR. I've been licensed by the state of Oregon since 2007.

As my profession continues to struggle for equitable treatment from health insurers and other barriers for proper inclusion with the rest of the primary care provider types, now is not the time to be burying us under multiple layers of management inside the Oregon Health Authority.

The amount of time and effort required to pull that transition off looks to me to be enormous. My profession can't help but perceive risk from this move given the history of what the profession has had to endure all these years since the first license was issued.

The state is looking for some small financial efficiency from this consolidation. Whatever that amount is cannot compare to the risks and uncertainties from pushing our licensing board down under that many layers of management.

My colleagues and I would rather pay higher licensing fees in order to keep our licensing board independent and without further supervision. Supervision by unnecessary and potentially hazardous layers of management that most likely will know very little about what makes naturopathic medicine special. Why we are important to maintain as a real and viable choice for how Oregonians choose to pursue their healthcare.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kristen Plunkett" with a stylized flourish at the end.

Kristen Plunkett, ND