

FROM THE DESK OF

Dr. Erin Fix

February 2, 2021

Re: HB2673, Support Fair Pay for Naturopathic Doctors (NDs)

Dear House and Senate Health Care Committees, Oregon Legislature,

I am a Naturopathic Doctor (ND) in my first year of residency working as a primary care provider in Portland and Salem. I go to work every day to deliver quality healthcare in my community. NDs train in a 4-year doctoral program with 2 years of clinical rotations typically in outpatient primary care. We add value to our medical system as providers who specialize in preventative health and lifestyle medicine. Our communities are experiencing epidemic rates of lifestyle-mediated disease. These conditions put patients at high risk for comorbidities. We need providers who are experts in this field now more than ever.

HB2902 passed in 2013 “requiring insurers to reimburse physician assistants and nurse practitioners in independent practices at the same rate as physicians for the same services.” There are many hard-working NDs filling the shortage of primary care providers in Oregon, and collectively we are asking for **“the same rate for the same service.”** Reimbursement should not be dictated by the type of provider, but by the service provided.

Unfair reimbursement practices limit patients’ access to care and put NDs at a significant disadvantage when applying for jobs and negotiating salaries. As a result, ND salaries directly reflect this reimbursement gap, making it difficult to repay student loans, pay a mortgage, and raise a family.

Since 2018, Naturopathic doctors have been included in the Oregon Rural Health Care Provider Incentive Program which offers primary care providers student loan repayment in return for providing health care in underserved communities in rural Oregon. Voting yes to HB2673 has the potential to keep more NDs in the state to fill this unmet need in our rural communities.

Oregon is my home, and I want to continue working hard for our communities. I should not have to do so at such great economic disadvantage compared to other providers. Voting yes to HB2673 would have a tremendous impact on my ability to provide quality care to patients and families, my future job prospects, and on my own quality of life. I urge you to consider the value that dedicated and passionate naturopathic doctors add to our communities.

Vote yes on HB2673 to support fair pay for Naturopathic Doctors.

Sincerely,

Dr. Erin Fix
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