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Re: YES ON HB 4006, Simply time for Fair Pay.

Dear House Health Care Committee,

My name is Judith Boice, and I am a Naturopathic Doctor (ND). I would like to share my experience working in Oregon as a licensed ND and ask for your support of HB 4006.

My passion is to serve my patients and support them in developing the level of health they desire. I have sacrificed years to medical school to become a licensed physician and practice medicine in my local community. I work with patients by helping them understand their medical condition, explaining their lab results, adopting lifestyle choices that move them toward their desired level of health, and prescribing pharmaceutical medications as needed.

I have worked in interdisciplinary medical teams in one of the nation's finest cancer care centers, Cancer Treatment Centers of America. Working as I did with a wide variety of healthcare providers, I came to understand the unique value of naturopathic medical care for patients with complex, chronic, late-stage disease.

I often manage the majority of my patients' healthcare needs, whether that be their annual physical, lab orders, health screenings, or prescription(s). When appropriate, I make referrals to other competent providers and specialists. In addition, I educate my patients about diet, movement, stress reduction, sleep and other lifestyle areas that improve their quality of life and reduce the need for pharmaceutical prescriptions. I work with patients to develop an individualized, comprehensive, long-term health care plan that prevents disease, improves health, and reduces healthcare costs.

Unfortunately, NDs are not being fairly compensated for our valuable contributions to healthcare. This disparity in our compensation makes it more difficult for people like me to stay in practice and deliver this comprehensive type of care. The state is allowing private insurance companies to limit access to healthcare for patients and their families in the community.

For those of us who participate in private insurance provider panels, we do so at a great economic disadvantage to our peers, making it difficult to repay student loans, support staff and their families, and give back to the community. One option is shift to an all-cash model, making this vital form of medicine accessible only to a select, privileged minority. The more sensible, equitable option is to finally pass HB 4006, guaranteeing the same compensation to all primary physicians, including naturopathic doctors, in the state of Oregon.

Sincerely yours,

Judith Boice, ND, LAc, FABNO