

Dear House Behavioral Health and Health Care Committee,

My name is Patricia Lowery and I am a patient of a licensed naturopathic doctor (ND). I would like to share my experience working with my doctor, and ask you to support HB2555.

My naturopath saved my life after 3 years of suffering and inadequate and ineffective care by multiple licensed MD's that were unable to help me. I would not be here today to tell you about this nor would I be here for my Grandchildren if not for my ND. I struggled to pay my ND for this care because my medicare would not cover Naturopathic care. So not only was my physical life in danger my financial situation left me struggling as well and bless her - my ND accepted what I was able to pay her - which wasn't much.

It's shameful that she was left taking so little for life saving care and you can fix this. Please listen. I wrote to you last year and the year before and nothing has changed. Life for people like me that have worked all our lives are falling through the cracks.

Though there are many diverse and valuable types of medical providers, the provider that I, above all, value for my regular care is my ND. The clinical expertise and unique training that my doctor offers, coupled with the dedicated time and attention given to all my concerns, makes her irreplaceable to me.

My ND manages the majority of my healthcare needs, whether it be my annual wellness visits, necessary lab and imaging tests, preventive screening exams or vital prescriptions. They also refer me to medical specialists as needed, working in partnership with other providers to offer a truly integrative approach to my healthcare. I never got that with regular medical care.

My ND takes the time to teach me about my health and how to best manage my concerns through diet and nutrition, staying active, overcoming stress, and improving my sleep,

She prescribes medications when needed or alternative treatments if warranted. This is the best type of preventive medicine and has saved me from worse illness or more expensive treatments down the line.

Unfortunately, naturopathic doctors in Oregon are not being fairly compensated for the care they give me and for the important role they play in our state's healthcare workforce. Naturopathic doctors are paid about half of what all the other provider types (MDs, DOs, NPs and PAs) are paid for the same exact billing code and same service provided. **This discrepancy puts my doctor on unstable financial ground and puts my access to my provider of choice in jeopardy. Naturopathic doctors are being forced to drop insurance plans to remain financially viable.**

It is essential that I be able to utilize my health insurance to see my Naturopathic doctor. I cannot afford to both purchase health insurance and pay out of pocket for my regular and preventive care. It's not only unfair, it's unrealistic. I need my ND to stay in network with my insurance and to stay in business!

I am asking you to please vote yes on HB2555 and ensure access to licensed naturopathic doctors.

Sincerely,

Patricia Sue Lowery

29513 Washington Way

Rainier, OR 97048

503-298-0739