

March 14, 2023

Re: HB 2555, Vote YES to Support Fair Pay for NDs

Dear House Behavioral Health and Health Care Committee,

My name is Dana Waichunas and I have been a primary care naturopathic doctor (ND), in practice in SE Portland for 13 years. I would like to share my experience working in Oregon as a licensed ND and urge you to please support HB 2555.

I provide comprehensive primary care to my patients in the greater Portland area at a Tier 4 primary care home. I proudly manage all my patient's primary care needs including referrals, care coordination, medication prescribing, cancer screenings, lab orders and I am on call for them. I often spend more time with my patients than standard PCPs, counseling them regarding their mental health, nutrition and lifestyle modifications. It is truly rewarding to fulfill this purpose in our community and utilize the knowledge and experience I have garnered over the last 13 years.

The sad reality is that due to the appalling level of discrepancy in reimbursement rates for our services, clinics like ours are unlikely going to be able to sustain ourselves at this level of care. The cost of running a primary care clinic with enough staff to deliver the care and pay providers fairly is simply cost-prohibitive at our current rates. I've observed that the inadequate funding also puts extra burden on our providers who, already underpaid, are leaving the profession due to burn out at alarming rates.

The bottom line is that the discrepancy in pay that the state is allowing of private insurance companies is not just unfair and discriminatory, but simply not sustainable.

At a time when Oregon needs more primary care physicians like us, we are here - working harder than ever - to serve our patients and communities through the pandemic and beyond.

Please help us to survive by finally passing HB 2555.

Sincerely,



Dana Waichunas, ND

Clinic address:

Center for Natural Medicine
1330 SE Cesar Chavez Blvd.
Portland, OR 97214