

Dear House Behavioral Health and Health Care Committee,

**My name is Dana Ward. My primary care doctor is a licensed naturopathic doctor (ND), and I'm writing to ask you to support HB2555.**

I have had many diverse and valuable types of medical providers over my nearly 60 years, and the provider that I have chosen 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 visit, necessary lab and imaging tests, preventive screening exams, or vital prescriptions. She also refers me to medical specialists as needed, working in partnership with other providers to offer a truly integrative approach to my healthcare. In the past years, she has referred me to a rheumatologist, an allergy specialist, and a gastroenterologist, among others. She provides fully integrated care with other "traditional" medical specialists just as any other primary care doctor would do.

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, in addition to prescribing medications or other treatments. Her approaches have helped me successfully address complex digestive issues in a comprehensive, holistic manner that other practitioners have not provided. Without her care, I would not be as healthy and functioning as well day-to-day as I am today.

Unfortunately, naturopathic doctors in Oregon are not being fairly compensated for the care they give patients 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. This puts them outside of the financial reach of many working people like myself that rely on employer-sponsored health insurance to make access to healthcare possible.**

It is essential that I be able to utilize my health insurance to see my doctor. I cannot afford to both pay for health insurance premiums and pay out of pocket for my regular and preventive care. It's not only unrealistic, it's unfair and favors wealthier Oregonians over working people like myself. 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 for the regular working people of this state.

Sincerely,  
Dana Ward, Portland, Oregon  
House District 28, Representative Dacia Grayber