

Submitter: Kathryn Brooks

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Behavioral Health and Health Care

Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB3439

As a Naturopathic Physician in Oregon since 2013, I have taken pride in serving the Residents of Oregon and accepting health insurance plans. I have not been able to afford a single employee to assist with my front office duties due to the lack of pay. The lack of pay should be embarrassing to these insurance companies. For example, Cigna pays \$55 for a 40-minute visit. This is laughable, as I have often thought about working as a barista at Starbucks or a bar tender where I could likely make more of a livable wage. Please highly consider the value of NDs in Oregon serving as primary care providers for the residents of the state. As healthcare costs rise, and the amount of available doctors, it would be in best interest to pay those who are still willing to do the work a livable wage. Please support this legislative action.

The members of the Patient Advocates for Naturopathic Physicians and the Oregon Association of Naturopathic Physicians (OANP) urge you to pass HB3439 out of the House Committee On Behavioral Health and Health Care. With 1200 Licensed Naturopathic Physicians serving over 100,000 Oregonians each year, HB3439 will help improve delivery of primary care services in our state.

HB3439 requires that insurance companies pay naturopathic doctors (ND) fairly and on par with what other primary care providers are paid for providing the same services. Currently, NDs are reimbursed on average at half the rate of PAs, NPs, DOs and MDs. NDs are well-regulated and licensed as primary care providers. Thousands of Oregonians seek out the safe, effective and integrative care that NDs provide.

Every year, NDs are financially forced to either lay off staff and close their clinics or to move to a cash model, excluding those who are not affluent. This is diminishing Oregonians' access to safe and effective naturopathic care and we as a state should not be complicit in this. Oregon is currently experiencing a primary care provider shortage which will only be exacerbated if HB3439 does not advance.

HB3439 has a minuscule fiscal impact of 3 million dollars embedded in the OHA biennial budget, yet the profound positive impact on patient care for Oregonians far outweighs the cost. This allocation would go toward primary care, which has been a priority of this legislature. HB3439 will not only increase patients' ability to choose their doctors, but will also support the hundreds of small businesses across the state that provide naturopathic care.

Please vote "YES" on HB3439 at its upcoming hearing.