

Submitter: GARY GLICK  
On Behalf Of: OANP  
Committee: House Committee On Behavioral Health and Health Care  
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB3439

The members of the Patient Advocates for Naturopathic Physicians and the Oregon Association of Naturopathic Physicians (OANP) are urging you to pass HB3439 out of the House Committee On Behavioral Health and Health Care. I am personally urging the recommendation of passage out of committee. The nation in general, and Oregon in particular, are faced with critical shortages in trained, capable, and experienced physicians and medical professionals in all practices and fields, with many counties unable to fulfill even basic health care needs in their communities. Even so, 1200 Licensed Naturopathic Physicians are today serving over 100,000 Oregonians each year. HB3439 will help improve delivery of primary care services in vast areas of our state, and will make it possible for fully-trained, experienced, and board-licensed naturopathic physicians to afford to continue to meet the medical care needs of our state.

HB3439 requires that insurance companies pay naturopathic doctors (ND) on par with all primary care providers as they provide the same qualified and capable services. Currently, NDs are reimbursed on average at only half the rate of their allopathic counterparts (PAs, NPs, DOs and MDs). NDs have for many years been fully regulated, licensed, and respected by peers and medical institutions as primary care providers.

Thousands of Oregonians seek out the safe, effective and integrative care that NDs provide. Thousands more are forced to travel extensively, experience dangerous delays, or even do without the care of a physician when otherwise motivated and available NDs simply cannot maintain a practice. Every year, NDs are financially forced to either lay off staff and close their clinics or to move to a cash model, denying competent medical care to Oregonians who are struggling to obtain safe and effective naturopathic care. As the elected leaders of all Oregonians, you must not allow complacency or complicity with Big Med and Big Pharma to repress equitable compensation for this entire community of licensed physicians. HB3439 must advance.

HB3439 has a minuscule fiscal impact of 3 million dollars embedded in the OHA biennial budget, yet the savings to Oregon's taxpayers in the availability of quality primary care and specialist services to avoid delays in treatment and costly remedial medical care has been universally reported to amount to many times more than any direct cost of this measure. It is also, as your esteemed colleagues and supporters have often advocated, is the right thing to do, in fairness to these medical

professionals and to Oregon's people. Improved availability and standardization of quality medical care has long been voiced as a priority of this legislature. HB3439 will not only increase patients' ability to find and choose among excellent medical providers -- it will also support the many hundreds of small businesses across Oregon that provide essential and valuable naturopathic care.

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

Gary Glick, MSA, CPL  
7826 SW Ruby Terrace  
Portland, OR 97219