

Submitter: Timothy Walter
On Behalf Of:
Committee: House Committee On Behavioral Health and Health Care
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB3439

Good morning -

I'm writing in support of HB3439. I am a naturopathic physician offering primary care in a Federally-Qualified Health Center, and as such I am paid a fair salary - compensation to my organization is primarily through the Oregon Health Plan (which already has pay parity for NDs). I am also acutely aware that if I were to move to a private practice, or try to establish a solo practice, I would be doing so at extreme financial disadvantage, as MD/DO/NP/PA colleagues are typically paid twice the rate by insurers that NDs are. While I have no interest in leaving my work as a community physician, I also would appreciate some amount of freedom to change the direction of my career.

Meanwhile, I am aware that there is a severe primary care shortage in the state of Oregon. I've had family members wait 4 months to get established with a new PCP - and I routinely see patients that have been waiting 6 months for our first office visit. Many NDs in private practice are practicing full-scope primary care (medication management, gynecologic exams and procedures, offering immunizations), but are limited in their ability to hire staff to improve efficiencies (and therefore take on more patients) as a direct result of the ongoing financial discrimination that HB3439 seeks to rectify. Supporting this bill will increase availability of Oregonians to access primary care physicians, while also supporting the small private practices - small businesses - where so many of my colleagues work.

Please help HB3439 get out of committee!

Thank you,
Bill Walter, ND
Eugene, Oregon