

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

Dear Members of the Legislative Body,

I am writing to express my strong support for pay parity for naturopathic doctors (NDs) and to urge you to take legislative action to ensure fair reimbursement for their services. I have witnessed firsthand the vital role that naturopathic doctors play in our healthcare system. However, the lack of pay parity continues to be a barrier that limits patient access to high-quality, preventive, and integrative healthcare.

Naturopathic doctors undergo rigorous medical education and training, including a four-year, accredited doctoral program with extensive clinical experience. They are licensed to diagnose, treat, and manage a wide range of acute and chronic conditions, emphasizing prevention, lifestyle medicine, and evidence-based natural therapies. Despite this, NDs are often reimbursed at significantly lower rates than their conventional medical counterparts for providing equivalent services, or in many cases, they are not reimbursed at all.

Pay parity is not just a matter of fairness; it is an issue of healthcare accessibility and equity. Many patients actively seek naturopathic care for chronic disease management, preventive medicine, and whole-person wellness. However, disparities in reimbursement create financial obstacles that prevent patients from utilizing these services, disproportionately affecting underserved and rural communities where naturopathic care can fill critical healthcare gaps.

Additionally, pay parity can help address the ongoing primary care provider shortage by ensuring that qualified NDs are fairly compensated for their work. This would encourage more NDs to remain in clinical practice, particularly in areas where access to healthcare is limited.

I urge you to support legislative measures that establish pay parity for naturopathic doctors, ensuring that they are reimbursed equitably for their essential contributions to patient care. This is a necessary step toward a more inclusive, cost-effective, and patient-centered healthcare system.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I appreciate your leadership in promoting policies that support healthcare access, fairness, and innovation.

Sincerely,
Dr. Emalee Knudsen