

Submitter: Elizabeth Bartman

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Behavioral Health and Health Care

Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB3439

I am submitting my statement for a second time, because upon review of my first submission, my position was recorded as: Oppose. However, I distinctly selected "Support" and want to submit again with STRONG Support for this measure. Please disregard the "oppose" from the prior submission, as that was in error.

I am a naturopathic doctor serving the communities of Silverton and Salem, OR. I graduated in 2013, and completed a 2-year family medicine residency with NUNM. Following residency, I began work in a daily care/urgent care facility, called Zoom Care, and provided valuable services to the city of Salem.

While working in this facility, I saw a lot of infections, most of which were viral in origin. A study published in JAMA Internal Medicine revealed that patients visiting urgent-care centers were most likely to leave with an antibiotic prescription, even if they had a respiratory illness for which the drugs are inappropriate. I was privy to this. What's worse, Antimicrobial resistant infections are becoming a leading cause of death world-wide. And overprescribing and mis-use of antibiotics is a major culprit of the resistance we are seeing.

Not only did my education provide me with a thorough understanding of the safe and efficacious use of medications, including antibiotics, it also provided me a deep understanding of medication misuse. Naturopathic doctors have been championing antibiotic stewardship for decades. Medscape, just this year (2025) released their antibiotic stewardship statements, imploring providers to understand and appropriate prescribe antibiotics. We, as naturopathic doctors, were ahead of curve, safely using natural support for viral infections and saving antibiotics for when they were truly needed. In fact, my PA, NP and MD colleagues would frequently ask me how to support these viral cases, when they knew that antibiotics were unnecessary, because they had no other tools.

I bring this up as one of many examples, because it reveals how impactful the naturopathic profession truly is within the medical community.

And yet - we are paid around 60% less than our medical counterparts for the same CPT codes.

Following 5 years in this community healthcare setting, I was told that because our

reimbursement rates were so low, our pay would be docked. Not only that, but any bonus structure previously set up to honor our hard work (based on hours worked and patients seen) was reduced. This meant that we had to work harder, and longer, to receive less money than our mid-level colleagues (PA's and NP's).

Management said our work was valued, and they did not want to lose us, but as a business, they could not afford to keep paying us at the same rate as a mid-level provider.

Our education places us as pioneers in the healthcare industry, supporting patients with appropriate and necessary medications, while also addressing the acute and chronic ailments afflicting our communities with more than just a drug - but also with nutritional guidance, environmental support, coaching, education, and empowerment. Allowing our patients to not just get by, but to actually thrive.

Yet the lack of pay parity prevents us from making a living wage. It prevents us from being able to support our community in ways that are not just empowering patients, but protecting public health.

Our pay needs to reflect our work, our impact to public health and our value to our patients and our community. I request that you strongly consider our bill to pass pay parity for Naturopathic Doctors in the state of Oregon.

Thank you for taking the time to read my statement and honoring my testimony today.