

Submitter: Amy Carlson

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Behavioral Health and Health Care

Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB3439

As a support of naturopathic medicine, and a support of Patient Advocates for Naturopathic Physicians and the Oregon Association of Naturopathic Physicians (OANP), I urge you to pass HB3439 out of the Behavioral Health and Health Care Committee.

With 1200 Licensed Naturopathic Physicians already serving 100,000+ Oregonians each year, HB3439 will help improve delivery of primary care services in our state.

Naturopathic doctors (NDs) are well-regulated and licensed as primary care providers. And thousands of Oregonians seek out the safe, effective and integrative care that NDs provide. Yet currently, NDs are reimbursed on average at half the rate of PAs, NPs, DOs and MDs. This means that every year, some 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 simply requires that insurance companies provide fair pay for naturopathic doctors (NDs) that is on par with what other primary care providers are paid for providing the same services. This has a minuscule fiscal impact of 3 million dollars embedded in the Oregon Health Authority biennial budget, yet offers a profound positive impact on patient care for Oregonians. This benefit far outweighs the cost. This allocation would go toward primary care, which has been a priority of this legislature.

HB3439 accomplishes several important things: 1) ensures fair pay for all providers who deliver primary care services, 2) improves access to primary care for Oregonians by both ensuring the primary care provider shortage is not exacerbated and giving patients greater ability to choose their doctors, and 3) supports the hundreds of small businesses across the state that provide naturopathic care to continue providing much needed services.

I strongly encourage you to vote "YES" on HB3439 at the hearing later this week.

Sincerely,
Amy Carlson