

Submitter: lisa anne ross  
On Behalf Of: OANP  
Committee: House Committee On Behavioral Health and Health Care  
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB3439

As a longtime patient of Oregon's naturopaths, I urge you to pass HB3439 out of the House Committee On Behavioral Health and Health Care. My primary care experience has drastically improved since moving to Oregon in 2008 and having access to naturopathic doctors. I was saddened and appalled to learn that they are not compensated on par with other medical professionals who provide the same services (though for naturopathic patients, our NDs arguably provide those same services with more attentiveness and more success than the MDs we have chosen to stop seeing). My naturopath provides with excellent healthcare and has helped me with chronic health issues that MDs have not been able to. It would be a HUGE loss to my personal health and well-being if she had to go out of business because she couldn't create a financially sustainable livelihood for herself due to lack of pay parity. I imagine most other naturopathic patients feel the same.

HB3439 requires that insurance companies pay naturopathic doctors (ND) fairly and on par with what other primary care providers are paid for providing the same services. Currently, NDs are reimbursed on average at half the rate of PAs, NPs, DOs and MDs. NDs are well-regulated and licensed as primary care providers. Thousands of Oregonians seek out the safe, effective and integrative care that NDs provide.

Every year, 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 has a minuscule fiscal impact of 3 million dollars embedded in the OHA biennial budget, yet the profound positive impact on patient care for Oregonians far outweighs the cost. This allocation would go toward primary care, which has been a priority of this legislature. HB3439 will not only increase patients' ability to choose their doctors, but will also support the hundreds of small businesses across the state that provide naturopathic care.

Please vote "YES" on HB3439 at its upcoming hearing, and support Oregonians continued access to the essential care that we want and need.