

February 12, 2025

Re: Support for HB3439

Dear Esteemed House Committee On Behavioral Health and Health Care,

I am writing in strong support of House Bill 3439, which would require insurance companies to reimburse naturopathic doctors (NDs) at the same rate as other healthcare providers, including doctors, physician assistants (PAs), and nurse practitioners (NPs), for performing equivalent services. As a naturopathic physician in practice since 2019, I am deeply committed to providing my patients with exceptional care, but I am increasingly burdened by the financial constraints caused by inadequate insurance reimbursements.

The majority of my patient panel (82%) is covered by Medicaid, with the remainder of my practice comprising private insurance and a small portion (<2%) being time-of-service or self-pay patients. Despite working full-time and being a licensed mid-level provider capable of diagnosing illnesses, treating patients, prescribing medications, ordering lab tests, performing minor surgeries, and engaging in preventive care, I find myself in a precarious financial position. My gross income is typically between \$60,000–\$70,000 per year, which drops to approximately \$40,000–\$50,000 after taxes. I have taken on significant debt—\$250,000 in student loans—to complete my education and training, yet the compensation I receive does not align with the value I provide.

As an example of the care I offer, here are a few Google reviews from my patients that demonstrate the impact of my work:

- *"I've been seeing the professionals at Collaborative Care/Sunnyside for well over two years, and literally every single individual I've seen has been nothing short of impressive. My main physician is Dr. Poe, and he has been especially thorough, polite, and communicative. At times, when I have a basic question or just want to provide a quick update, he normally schedules a virtual visit or a quick phone call within 24-48 hours. Great service and expertise... 5 stars out of 5 stars, all earned and well-deserved."*
- *"I have a lot of complex long-term health issues, and many doctors I've seen throughout my life have dismissed me or felt overwhelmed by my conditions. I had reached a point where I wouldn't even consider seeing a male doctor until my chiropractor suggested Dr. Poe. I was dubious but decided to give it a try. Dr. Poe was incredibly trauma-informed from the start, which I greatly appreciated as a mental health professional myself. He listens carefully, and has helped me through some incredibly difficult times. He offers both alternative and western medical options, providing a holistic approach to care. I've recommended Dr. Poe to several friends, and they've all been extremely happy with their decision. He is the best doctor I have had in my life."*
- *"As a medical social worker and therapist, it takes a lot to impress me, but I have been consistently impressed by the care I've received at Sunnyside Collaborative Care. Dr. Poe and the staff are compassionate and knowledgeable, treating the whole person—not just the symptoms. When I referred my adult daughter to SCC, they helped her uncover a rare condition she had been seeking*

answers for years. Dr. Poe's holistic approach to care, including trauma assessments and screenings, has had a profound impact on my health, and I am deeply grateful for his kind, attentive care."

These testimonials speak to the value I bring to my patients, providing them with the comprehensive, thoughtful, and compassionate care they deserve. Despite the significant contributions I make to the healthcare field, the compensation I receive does not reflect the services I provide.

As an anecdotal comparison, I have friends who are registered nurses (RN), a profession without prescriptive authority, who earn up to 150% of what I make (approximately \$90,000). While the roles and responsibilities of providers who cannot diagnose and treat are not directly comparable, this stark contrast in pay highlights the inequity in how naturopathic physicians, who are fully trained to diagnose, treat, and provide comprehensive care, are compensated.

I respectfully urge you to support and approve HB3439, as it would provide fair recognition for the services we provide and ensure that NDs are compensated equitably for the work we do. The passage of this bill would not only improve financial stability for naturopathic physicians but also affirm the important role we play in delivering high-quality care to our communities.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'F. Lee Poe' with a stylized flourish at the end.

Francis Lee Poe, ND

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