

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

My name is Yolanda Fernandez and I am a Puerto Rican naturopathic doctor working to serve the Spanish-speaking population in Oregon. I am writing today in strong support of HB 3439 because I see firsthand the critical need for accessible, culturally competent healthcare for Oregon's growing Spanish-speaking communities.

Many of my patients struggle to find providers who understand their language, their culture, and the unique challenges they face in navigating the healthcare system. As a bilingual provider, I bridge that gap, ensuring that my patients feel heard, respected, and properly cared for. However, despite my dedication to this underserved community, I face significant financial challenges due to unfair reimbursement policies that undervalue naturopathic physicians.

I have the option of returning to Puerto Rico, where the cost of living is significantly lower and financial sustainability would be much easier. However, my commitment to my patients and my passion for serving Oregonians keep me here. I want to continue making a difference in the lives of those who rely on my care, but without fair compensation, sustaining my practice and livelihood becomes increasingly difficult.

The passage of HB 3439 is crucial to ensuring that naturopathic doctors like me can continue to serve the diverse populations of Oregon. We provide essential primary care services, improve patient outcomes, and fill gaps in healthcare access, particularly for marginalized communities. Without this bill, the Spanish-speaking population and many others will face even greater healthcare disparities.

I urge you to support HB 3439 so that providers like myself can continue to serve the people of Oregon rather than being forced to leave due to financial instability. Everyone deserves access to quality, patient-centered care, regardless of language or background.

Thank you for your time and consideration.