

Submitter: Jamie Kunkle
On Behalf Of:
Committee: House Committee On Behavioral Health and Health Care
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB3042

I am writing to oppose HB3042 expanding the ways in which " a person can get in trouble with the Oregon Board of Naturopathic Medicine." We were not informed of this bill until TWO days ago as it was not made public or announced by any entities including Board of Naturopathic Medicine.

Expanding power over the Naturopathic profession, that is not bound to conventional standards of practice, may lead to abuse of power based on politics, narratives or subjective opinions on "correct or appropriate" practice or questions of an individual's character without a fair chance to legally defend themselves or at a significant financial cost to the provider. Without independent oversight, this is a slippery slope that I feel can alienate and harm providers who are NOT harming any patients in their communities based on a board's subjective "potential to harm" that may not be true and outside the expertise of limited board biases.

The wording of this proposed measure may unfairly target those practicing in the field of complex chronic illness (illnesses outside of diabetes, heart disease and cancer-- see my definition below) where there are little established standards of care no matter what degree one holds (since these individuals often do not respond favorably to conventional and standard (often archaic) treatments, one must support these patients through vigorous scientific research, testing, observational studies, specialty conferences and historic/traditional therapies to name a few). Many chronic illness patients are more sensitive patients and their treatment involves a highly individualized approach.

This population has often been marginalized and does not have access to providers that can actually help them as it takes significant training to understand the complexity of their conditions. Making it more difficult for these providers to practice in Oregon will inevitably reduce access further to medicine for those suffering from complex chronic illnesses including but not limited to: Long COVID syndrome, Chronic fatigue/myalgic encephalomyelitis, fibromyalgia, tick and vector borne infectious diseases, environmental illnesses (including mold/biotoxins), hypermobility/Ehlers danlos, POTS/dysautonomia and mast cell activation syndromes. Many Naturopathic Doctors in Oregon are well equipped to safely and effectively work with these populations which fills a fairly large gap in care. Threatening their practices as "outside of scope" could drive these folks away from the state of Oregon.

Our Oregon Naturopathic Board has long been supportive of the freedom to practice. The timing of this proposal is very concerning and worries me that national politics and political biases have made their way into Oregon and we will no longer have these freedoms and protections to support those in need. This bill will almost inevitably do more harm than good. Please do not allow this to pass.

Thank you,

Jamie Kunkle ND (Salem, OR)