

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

As a Oregon licensed ND and business owner who has had to lay off staff, close a practice and move to a cash model, excluding those patients who are not as affluent, I strongly urge you to surpass HB3439 to ensure healthcare services to Oregonians.

Currently, I am having to decline patient referral requests from OHSU Dermatology for patients referred to me due to the patients' inability to afford services when out of network or if they are covered by Medicare. Many patients are unaware my services are out of network and are surprised to learn the reason is due to a lack of ND pay parity in Oregon. When I first started my clinical practice, I was able to order labs in network and had good in network referral options for patients, but over time that has greatly diminished. Now most patients can barely afford the basic lab fees, visit and treatment costs needed for proper care. Patients are being referred out of state for care and sometimes still unable to get the care they need due to a lack of physicians who recognize and treat infectious diseases. At the recent Center for Lyme Action meeting with Congress and the Senate, patient advocates shared stories of having to seek care out of state or pay out of pocket for naturopathic care. This should not be an acceptable standard, especially for reportable cases, such as Lyme Disease and Babesiosis. Naturopathic doctors should not be reimbursed less than PAs and NPs especially when dealing with a higher complexity of patient care, such as the naturopathic physicians filling the role of infectious disease physicians in the state of Oregon. This is unacceptable and patients are paying the price or not receiving care.

The members of the Patient Advocates for Naturopathic Physicians and the Oregon Association of Naturopathic Physicians (OANP) urge you to pass HB3439 out of the House Committee On Behavioral Health and Health Care. With 1200 Licensed Naturopathic Physicians serving over 100,000 Oregonians each year, HB3439 will help improve delivery of primary care services in our state.

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.