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Chair Greenlick and Members of the House Committee on Health Care:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today in support of HB 3301. For the record, my name is Sara Gillham. I am appearing today as a naturopathic physician, and I am conveying the support of ZoomCare for this measure. As you know, ZoomCare is an integrated, on-demand delivery system providing healthcare at our 25 neighborhood clinics and advanced care studios. As a licensed insurer in Oregon we are able to offer our patients Care, Coverage, and Cloud - a technology platform that seamlessly connects our patients with their providers and their insurance. Within ZoomCare, I manage the primary care group, which includes primary care, pediatrics, performance medicine and mental health services, as well as a team of providers in our Illness/Injury service.

I am here today to speak in support of HB 3301 because it aligns with important policy objectives already established by the leadership of this committee: increasing access to care, ensuring the right care is delivered, and reducing healthcare costs. As you know, the Oregon Healthcare Workforce's 5 year work plan specifically identified "removing insurance barriers to naturopathic doctors" as an important strategy for increasing the primary care workforce. HB 3301 is an important step in reducing these barriers.

Current practices of categorizing naturopaths as specialists leads to extra patient and system costs and blocks access to affordable primary care services. This is due to the fact that insurance plans require higher copays/coinsurance for specialist visits, or even make specialist visits subject to the deductible, whereas visits to a PCP for preventive services have no copay and the deductible is waived.

ZoomCare is built on a one-provider team. We employ medical doctors, nurse practitioners, physician assistants, and naturopathic physicians as primary care providers. All providers diagnose and treat the same conditions in the same manner and are held to the exact same standards of care; many degrees, one way of practicing medicine.

More than 25% of ZoomCare patients carry insurance that forces categorization of naturopaths as specialists; I can provide additional information on specific insurers if desired. This means that despite consistency in the care delivered, more than a quarter of our patients are essentially playing russian roulette when scheduling a visit. If the provider at their neighborhood clinic that day happens to be a PA, they win; if the provider is a ND, they lose. These higher patient costs can cause patients to abstain from receiving the care they need, ultimately driving them to much higher cost solutions like the Emergency Room due to wasted time and disease progression. Allowing naturopaths to self-categorize as PCPs would resolve this issue.

HB 3301 is a modest reform that will have a substantial impact on increasing patient access and appropriate utilization of primary care and preventive services.

Sara Gillham, ND
Clinical Manager
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