



Statement in Support of HB 2090
January 21, 2019

The Oregon Association of Naturopathic Physicians (OANP) works to promote public awareness of the benefits of naturopathic medicine, the success of Oregon's naturopathic physicians, the efficiency of government, and always the wellbeing of all Oregonians. To those ends, we urge you to vote in favor of HB 2090.

HB 2090 removes a second Peer Review Committee provision in a leftover ORS statute from 1989 that directs the Oregon Board of Naturopathic Medicine (OBNM). The function intended in this obsolete ORS is instead filled by a hired private investigator. OANP is satisfied that the process in current practice by OBNM with this ORS removed is streamlined and more efficient than a process that includes a separate, second peer review committee. Peer review is not at all lost with the removal of this ORS, simply provided in one step instead of two, by the entire licensing board.

All licensing bodies exist to protect the public, and we strongly support the OBNM's efforts to investigate and pursue disciplinary action on licensees who are practicing unacceptably. Attentive, effective, independent licensing boards are essential to protect the public from incompetent and reckless medical practice, unethical and illegal behavior by doctors. This oversight allows practitioners in good standing the privilege of independent practice. Oregon has been licensing naturopathic physicians since 1927.

The actions of Oregon naturopathic physicians are governed by the regulatory and public policy frameworks established in ORS and OAR. These laws and rules, implemented through OBNM require sustained annual licensure, annual attestations subject to perjury law of good moral character and behavior, and a complaint process whereby naturopathic physicians are accountable when allegations of wrongdoing are filed against them.

Complaints might come from anyone, but especially patients, family members, and other health care providers who experience and witness the actions of the doctor first hand. Naturopathic physicians have their own mandatory reporting obligation when they witness facts indicating endangerment of patients, unethical behavior or law breaking. Naturopathic physicians are thus obligated to enter complaints to the oversight processes of OBNM and other Oregon licensing boards.

Peer review is essential to proper adjudication of the behavior and practice of medical professionals. Only peers have the appropriate knowledge and insight to fully assess any wrongdoing that may be present, while also providing a fair and just due process for the person under allegation. OANP does not condone reckless, unethical or illegal behavior by naturopathic physicians and passionately supports the essential role of OBNM in rooting out and appropriately disciplining such behavior whenever it is found and brought to attention.

In Oregon the governor appoints, and the senate confirms a standing board of 5 actively licensed naturopathic physicians to provide OBNM's peer review. To be licensed by Oregon, naturopathic physicians must complete a naturopathic medical program at a four-year, post-graduate, federally and regionally accredited medical school.

The licensing board also includes 2 unaffiliated public members, also appointed by the governor and confirmed by the senate to add independent oversight to the peer review process itself.

How any particular licensing board operates their peer review process might vary, but in Oregon medical boards tend to use investigators to develop and reveal facts. Then the elected board is assembled to assess those facts and to create judgment and disciplinary actions as warranted. This is the current process of OBNM, to use a private investigator to establish facts before peer review, judgment and discipline by the elected board of peers. OANP finds no fault in this process and is satisfied that the ORS asked for removal in this bill is an artifact of an obsolete approach.

The Oregon Association of Naturopathic Physicians was formed in 1909, and labored for 18 years to achieve state licensing through an independent licensing board. In the time since, as a profession, we have never waivered in our support for the honor and privilege to serve Oregonians made possible by the continuous service of the Oregon Board of Naturopathic Medicine and its mission to protect the public.

We urge a “YES” vote on HB 2090.