

Name: Elke Schleiss, RD, LD

Date: February 9, 2019

Subject: Oregon Association of Naturopathic Physicians Pay Parity Bill

Dear Senate and Health Care Committees,

My name is Elke Schleiss and I am a dietitian in private practice in SW Portland. I would like to share my experience working with a ND in order to show the importance of this profession in the delivery of quality healthcare in the state of Oregon.

My area of specialty is eating disorders; the population with which I work requires a high degree of time, patience and empathy in order to first build trust and then partner with a patient in carving a path toward recovery. Additionally, these patients also tend to require a great deal of close medical monitoring of lab values and vital signs to ensure physical safety. Naturopathic physicians are perfectly positioned to do both. In my experience working with NDs over the past several years, I have been struck by the large amount of time and care each of my patients seeing NDs receive, consequently these patients feel seen and heard, in addition to knowing that their medical needs are competently met, resulting in a person who flourishes and feels connected to her treatment providers.

With my patient population, I work closely with Medical Doctors and Naturopathic Doctors – I have never felt that my patients seeing NDs receive lower quality care than if they were seeing a MD; on the contrary, I first refer my clients to a local ND before I refer to MDs because I think qualified NDs provide a higher degree of care, time and attention to their patients. I feel that NDs are certainly comparable to MDs in care and treatment of patients in Oregon and, as such, there must be pay equity among the professions. Many of my patients (and myself included) prefer the care of a ND over a MD. The clinic model for MD care is brief, impersonal, and problem-centered. The clinic model for ND care is 30-60 minutes, thorough, interpersonal, holistic, and human-centered. Both my patients and I prefer working with NDs for this reason.

In Portland, I work most closely with Sara Hopkins, ND, LAc. The level of high quality, evidence-based, empathetic care my patients receive from Dr. Hopkins is second to none. Her understanding of the eating disorder population is excellent and she is always researching and learning more in order to be certain she is providing the most up-to-date care in both Western and Eastern medicine modalities. In addition, each client feels seen and heard by Dr. Hopkins. Consequently, I always feel that each person I send her way will receive the best of patient care.

I am asking that you vote yes on the Naturopathic Physician Pay Parity bill.

Sincerely,  
Elke Schleiss, RD, LD

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