

Name: Erin Helton PA-C

Date:2/13/19

Subject: Oregon Association of Naturopathic Physicians Pay Parity Bill

Dear Senate and Health Care Committees,

My name is Erin Helton and I am a Certified Physician Assistant working in family medicine/urgent care with Providence Medical Group. I would like to share my experience working with an ND to show the importance of this profession in the delivery of quality healthcare in the state of Oregon, and the barriers that they face in trying to deliver this care.

I had not met any NDs until I worked at ZOOM+Care and prior to this had no idea of their level of education and scope of practice. What is shown in media gives a very negative connotation. However the NDs that I worked with were very knowledgeable and added another viewpoint of things not learned in the traditional medical setting.

When I worked with them, the NDs are seen as peers and partners in healthcare delivery. They treated the same complaints and patients that I did with the same knowledge and skill, and even had naturopathic options available to offer patients if desired. I would often find myself referring patients to them for this specifically when patients wanted more natural options where appropriate, and I do not possess this knowledge from my personal education. It was interesting to consult with them and ask for different ways to meet my patients' needs

Frustratingly for my ND colleagues, reimbursement rates are abysmal by insurances for patients to see them. This causes a problem with my colleagues who have to rely on patients that can self pay for services which pigeonholes the providers in private practice, and it severely limits the patients who schedule not knowing the difference of the degrees, receiving the same care, then owing for the visit later when their EOB tells them the ND was not covered. This is a major source of friction for patients and providers and does not help the, incorrect, negative view that NDs do not practice the same as other practitioners.

I have been extremely impressed by multiple Naturopathic Physicians I have worked with over the years and it is important for patients to be able to choose them as an option to provide care. Their education provides them allopathic as well as naturopathic medical modalities and they bring new and interesting options to the medical field.

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

Sincerely,

Erin M Helton, PA-C

PMG Scholls Immediate Care Provider