

Holly Denman
13921 SE Tiara Drive
Portland,OR 97267
denmanholly@gmail.com
503-701-0009

February 13, 2019

Subject: Oregon Association of Naturopathic Physicians Pay Parity Bill

Dear Senate and Health Care Committees,

My name is Holly Denman and I am a patient of a Portland area Naturopathic Physician.

For most of my 64 years, I was *not* a proponent of naturopathic medicine. As a two time cancer survivor, I depended on western medicine for my treatments. However, three years ago my body was so ravaged by chemotherapy, steroids and surgery I was not even strong enough to begin physical therapy. Had I continued with the quality of life I had prior to working with a naturopath, I have every reason to believe that physician assisted suicide would have been my final choice.

Finally, a friend convinced me to see a naturopath. With a complicated medical history, I honestly did not hold much hope of improvement (especially with my skepticism about naturopathic medicine). To have a doctor take two hours to listen to my medical and family history allowed me to talk through concerns and ask questions which I hesitated to ask my oncologist or my primary care physician because of time constraints. Frankly, I was surprised with the depth of questioning and the resulting recommendations. Over the next two years I regained my strength, my balance and my immune system. I also regained feeling in my legs and got relief from the tinnitus in my ears; both side effects from treatment which I expected to live with the rest of my life. To say that working with a naturopath saved my life is accurate.

Looking back, I wish I had started working with a naturopath at the beginning of my diagnosis. I believe my side effects and symptoms could have been mitigated and saved me several trips to the emergency room in an ambulance (and thousands of dollars). As with any doctor, following directions makes the difference and I was motivated because I saw nearly immediate improvement.

I am a private pay health insurance Oregonian. My monthly premiums are \$971.00. My deductible is \$7,000 and co-payments are \$80. None of the supplements (which I attributed to my recovery) prescribed by my naturopath are covered by insurance. Even with all of those barriers, I prefer to contact my naturopath before I contact my primary care physician. My ND drives my health care and helps me make the decisions regarding treatment. For the last year we have been working on my high blood pressure (another “gift” of cancer treatment). Currently I am on a combination of vitamin and mineral supplements AND prescription medication which seems to be working well. My ND is honest with me when she thinks prescription medication is necessary. I have never felt like it was an “ND v.s. M.D” battle. I am also now off of all anti-depressant and anti-anxiety medication. None of this would have happened with my primary care physician (whom I have trusted with my life for nearly 25 years) or my oncologist.

In my experience, my ND is every bit as educated, and qualified as my primary care physician. I imagine she had the same student loan debt load too. For me to see my ND should carry the same reimbursement as MDs or DOs. To know that they are not reimbursed the same is absurd, especially considering what I pay for my insurance coverage and who has contributed the most to my recovery.

I am asking you to ask hard questions and get answers. I am asking that you support equal pay to that of MDs and DOs (and even Nurse Practitioners and Physician Assistants). I am asking that you not reduce NDs to “second class” medical professionals. They are not! I am asking that you vote yes on the Naturopathic Physician Pay Parity bill.

With confidence in your decision, I am respectfully,

Holly Denman

“The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men to do nothing.” Edmund Burke