

2/12/19

Subject: Oregon Association of Naturopathic Physicians Pay Parity Bill

Dear Senate and Health Care Committees,

I am a patient of a Naturopathic Physician. I would like to share my experience working with an ND to show the importance of this profession in the state of Oregon. I began seeing my ND, Dr. Jennifer Karon, in 2013 after a sudden miscarriage. I truly credit the treatment and care I received from her with my recovery after the miscarriage, conceiving and carrying to term my second pregnancy, and my easy recovery after an emergency c-section. Dr. Karon is a specialized practitioner of Arvigo Mayan Abdominal Therapy which I benefited from before, during, and after my pregnancy. As I said, I had a c-section but I experienced minimal pain, movement restrictions, and muscle weakness than what was expected after the major surgery. Throughout my time as Dr. Karon's patient, I had Kaiser insurance and was seen regularly by physicians at Kaiser. In the last 6 years under the care of an ND, I have received more holistic and medically-grounded monitoring and treatment that has resulted in measurable positive health outcomes than the care I have received through Kaiser. These have included: detection through lab and bloodwork of abnormally low levels of progesterone and Vitamin D, regular monitoring of bloodwork to proactively address health concerns, medical and emotional support during early stages of breastfeeding, management of chronic sinus infections without the use of antibiotics, cranial sacral therapy, etc. In contrast, my experiences through Kaiser have not allowed me access to a similar highly specialized and personal level of care as that which I receive from my ND.

As an individual who understands the value of a healthy community and recognizes the exorbitant costs of managing health through emergency care medical visits, I have appreciated the proactive, holistic, and individualized approach that NDs take with each patient. It is of utmost importance to me that NDs should be paid comparable to other providers, including medical doctors. The detriment to our society is fewer people are able to seek naturopathic care due to the cost barrier. When I started seeing my ND, she was able to bill my Kaiser insurance. As Kaiser became more prohibitive of what they would cover and the amounts they would pay for medical services, it was no longer financially feasible for her to continue to bill Kaiser. As a result, I shoulder the financial burden of continuing to be under her care and I'm privileged to be able to do so. Do I think it's fair that I have to pay fully out of pocket to receive a higher standard of medical care? Absolutely not! I am asking that you vote yes on the Naturopathic Physician Pay Parity bill.

Sincerely,