

March 25, 2021

Re: SB772, Support Fair Pay for Naturopathic Doctors (NDs)

Dear Senator Patterson,

My name is Sonia Sosa and I am a medical doctor and your constituent. I would like to share my experience(s) working with an ND as a medical provider and colleague and ask you to please support SB772.

I work at OHSU Family Medicine at Richmond Clinic, a Federally Qualified Health Center in Portland. We serve a primarily Medicaid and Medicare population and the waitlist for a new patient appointment is at least 6 weeks and only continues to grow. Our situation is hardly unique. We need more primary care providers in Oregon. The training and tenets of naturopathy are to see the patient as a whole, to work toward prevention and to identify and treat the cause of illness and this primes naturopaths to work as primary care providers.

At Richmond Clinic we have created a unique offering for our patients. The family medicine faculty and residents have teamed up with naturopathic faculty and residents to see patients in a shared visit in order to provide comprehensive integrative medical care. Though this clinical experience I have worked closely with several naturopathic faculty and numerous residents and students. Their knowledge, compassion and work ethic have impressed me over and over. Additionally, they have shown that they can confidently work with underserved patient population and are able to adeptly create evidenced based care plans that are accessible to patients of all socioeconomic backgrounds. Our own family medicine residents are often very impressed by their knowledge base and even seek out additional opportunities to see patients along with the naturopathic residents outside of our clinic setting.

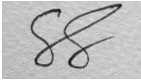
I will never forget one of the naturopathic faculty telling me about a patient that she was seeing. He was a patient that society had given up on- he had no family, no friends, he had been dismissed from every practice in the town he lived and even his case worker felt that his case was helpless. One day he just showed up on the doorsteps of the NUNM clinic and demanded to be seen immediately. His blood pressure was found to be very elevated. The enormous lengths that this provider went to in order to care for this patient were almost unprecedented. She acted as medical provider, therapist, case worker and I'm sure even more for this patient. As I spoke to her she was working to come up with a transition plan for this patient that would give him the best chance for success because the patient was going to be on Medicare soon and as a naturopath she was no longer able to see him. It was very clear through this example that she was not only able to provide primary care to this very challenging patient but she could excel at it.

Patients also deserve the right to choose naturopathic providers as their primary care providers. In most cases they do currently have this right however reality is that if naturopaths continue to be reimbursed at significantly lower amounts for the same quality care they will leave the field of primary care and they may leave Oregon as well.

In conclusion, naturopathic doctors provide high quality primary care, they do so for very challenging patients and patients choose to go to them for these services. Naturopaths should be paid equal to their MD, DO, PA and NP colleagues for their services.

I am asking that you vote yes on SB772 and support fair pay for Naturopathic Doctors.

Sincerely,

A small, square, grayscale image of a handwritten signature. The signature is written in a cursive style, appearing to be the initials 'SS'.

Sonia Sosa, MD