

Dear Senate and Health Care Committees,

My name is Amy Smith and I am a patient of a Naturopathic Physician named Dr. Kelly Owens. I would like to share my experience working with an ND to show the importance of this profession in the state of Oregon.

My family and I have had Dr. Kelly Owens as our family doctor for around 11 years now. Dr. Owens is a Naturopathic Physician and is the most amazing practitioner I've ever worked with. She makes sure that my family and I feel heard, we're treated as people, that we have open honest communication, and she always follows through on her commitments to us.

What I appreciate about working with Dr. Owens is that we always try to understand the root of the problem together vs throwing medications at the symptoms and hoping it fixes it. We discuss how I'm feeling, what are my stress levels, how's my diet, how am I feeling mentally, etc. She treats my family and I holistically and not just the symptoms we're having in that moment. If my family or I do need medications, she doesn't hesitate to discuss and prescribe them as an option.

As the one in my family who carries health insurance, I did try to switch from my naturopath to a regular medical general practice doctor after I moved to the other side of town a few years ago. I was immediately reminded of why we had chosen a naturopath to begin with. The new doctor I had didn't care about me as a person. I was just another number/patient that day. The new doctor got upset with me when I asked if there were alternative treatments when I would come in with a cold or bring in my children. I ended up switching back to Dr. Owens, my naturopath, after a few months. Her amazing care and investment in our health was well worth the 45 minute drive to her office.

Because of the negative experiences my family and I have had in the past with regular medical doctors and because of the amazing value we've found in having a Naturopathic Physician, I think it is absolutely critical to people's health, both mental and physical, to have the choice in who they receive their care from.

Dr. Owens has been there for me through my daughter's autoimmune diagnosis, my own diagnosis of MS, she's partnered with my midwives for the pregnancy and birth of both my son and my youngest daughter, my ADHD diagnosis, and so many others through the years. I've never had to wait months to see her, there have never been any hidden charges/fees I didn't know about, and her care of my family has been amazing.

I tell you all of this to ask you a question; why are naturopathic physicians paid so little compared to the other providers I have seen?

I am asking that you please vote yes on the Naturopathic Physician Pay Parity bill. This is something that is close to my heart and we all know is the right thing to do.

Thank you for reading my letter and I hope you have a good day.

Sincerely,

Amy Smith