

February 12, 2021

Re: HB2673, Support Fair Pay for Naturopathic Doctors (NDs)

Dear Senate and Health Care Committees,

I am asking you to vote yes on HB2673 to support fair pay for Oregon Naturopathic Physicians.

The disparity between reimbursements for Naturopathic Physicians on the one hand and MDs DOs, FNPs and PAs on the other has been succinctly described elsewhere (see "Commercial Health Insurance Reimbursements in Oregon Primary Care – Report on Years 2014-2016" by Jeff Clark, ND).<sup>1</sup>

This disproportional discrepancy outlined by Dr. Clark must be corrected as it creates a business environment for Naturopathic Physicians that is untenable with success. Naturopathic medicine must be allowed to flourish as of all the professionals listed above, it is Naturopathic Doctors that are best trained to spare the State of Oregon unnecessary medical costs. Naturopathic Physicians are committed to following the tenet to "First Do No Harm". It is this principle that, when applied to patient care, provides the greatest benefit with the least potential for harm. This approach leads to improved outcomes and lower health care costs. For example, the underlying causes of conditions such as high cholesterol and diabetes are often poor diet and lifestyle factors such as lack of exercise. Changing these lifestyle factors can eliminate the need for one or more prescription medications that would typically be recommended for the rest of that patient's life.

According to the American College of Surgeons and the American Medical Association, among the most common surgeries performed in the United States are coronary artery bypass surgery, carotid endarterectomy, and low back pain surgery.<sup>2</sup> Because NDs often promote less expensive, non-surgical options to patients earlier in the disease process, some of these expensive surgeries can be avoided. One major study investigating the effects of lifestyle improvement in patients with coronary atherosclerosis found that after only one year of following lifestyle recommendations, about 80% of participants were able to bring about plaque regression and avoid surgery without the use of lipid lowering agents.<sup>3</sup> The study estimated that this would save almost \$30,000 per patient in the first year alone.<sup>4</sup>

I am using these examples to substantiate the fact that Naturopathic Physicians hold a position of consequence in the Oregon health care system and that their businesses must be permitted to flourish. Insurance reimbursement for Oregon Naturopathic Doctors has quite simply made this success extremely unlikely. Dr. Clark has established that that the single most significant factor that has prevented the Oregon community of NDs from achieving even moderate financial fluidity is the current status of insurance reimbursements for Naturopathic Physicians.

Please correct this oversight, support the position that the Naturopathic community is best trained to save the State of Oregon millions of dollars of health care costs and vote in favor of HB2673.

Yours in Health,



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1. <https://www.naturalmedicinejournal.com/blog/how-does-naturopathic-medicine-lower-health-care-costs>
2. Stanford Health Care. General Surgery-Common Surgical Procedures. Online access: <https://stanfordhealthcare.org/medical-treatments/g/general-surgery/procedures.html>
3. Ornish D, Brown SE, Scherwitz LW, et al. Can lifestyle changes reverse coronary heart disease? The Lifestyle Heart Trial. *Lancet*. 1990;336:129-133.
4. Guarneri E, Horringan, BJ, Pechura, CM. 2010. The Efficacy and Cost-Effectiveness of Integrative Medicine: A Review of the Medical and Corporate Literature. *Bravewell Collaborative Report*. June, 2010.